Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

THE NEW POLITICAL SITUATION

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Notes of the Month

May Day and the New Political Situation—The Masks are Threadbare—New Moods of the Masses—The Next Step Forward—The School of Military Reverses—Churchill's Record—The Figurehead and the Class—A New World Situation—"Starve or Rebel"—Bankrupt Rulers—From 1914 to 1939—From Chamberlain to Churchill—Collapse of Illusions—Churchill's Plan and America's Counter-Plan—One Year of Churchill's Plan—United States and Britain—Crisis of British Imperialism—Dilemmas of Peace or War—U.S.S.R. in the Second Year of War—Peace Plans and War Plans—The Real Danger—The Struggle of the Balkan Peoples—Soviet Victory in the Far East—The Choice Before the People—the First Task—May Day and the Mobilisation of the Front of the People.

ON THIS second May Day in war-time great issues are opening out before the people. The violent developments of the war are bringing a new political situation. The fate of the peoples of all the countries of the war-torn capitalist world, and not least of this country, is being thrown into the balance in these coming months. With American entry into the war now becoming fully effective, the war becomes world war. From the Pacific to the Atlantic, from the tropics of Africa to Greenland, the naked struggle for world domination sweeps forward, with little room left for national defencist concealment in the case of the great imperialist Powers, whose expeditionary forces, warships and airfleets range over the globe from continent to continent in ceaselessly shifting fronts of warfare. When Australians and New Zealanders are sent to die in the mountains of Thessaly or the gorges of Abyssinia: when the cream of the fighting forces of Britain, which is declared to be under imminent threat of invasion, are dispatched thousands of miles away to join Indian forces levied from the other end of the globe in order to hold the oilfields of Irak; when German workers and peasants in uniform are trans-shipped to North Africa and the deserts of the Sahara; when American invaders seize Greenland in defiance of juridical protests, and Japanese invaders penetrate Indo-China, it becomes difficult to maintain the propagandist myth of the national defencist character of the war, or to conceal the grim struggle of empires for world domination. Hitler bestrides Europe and drives towards the Middle East. But the Anglo-American coalition still counts on its ultimate superiority of resources to conquer. The relations of the capitalist world and the Soviet Union are ominously sharpening. The crisis of British imperialism is extreme. What is the prospect? Well may the peoples ask this question, as they scan with anxiety the dark horizon, as they see the outlines of the old order crumbling around them, and still search to find the way to the new, to their own solution.

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A NEW AND deeper questioning is stirring millions of people. As the war advances; as its frenzied fury destroys in days and weeks the independence of nations with centuries of traditions; lashes civilians, men, women and children alike; lays cities waste; spreads shortage and starvation; as the rulers on both sides refuse to declare any war aim save victory; on both sides impose limitless burdens and sacrifices on the working masses in the name of the sacred cause of victory; on both sides hold down subject nations, numbering many scores of millions, by armed force, and plunder their wealth; on both sides protect and multiply the wealth and profits of the ever narrowing, more concentrated and powerful multi-millionaire combines, the Krupps, Vickers, U.S. Steel, etc., whose profits now soar to astronomical figures (Krupps from 395 million Reichsmarks profits in 1939 to 421 million in 1940; U.S. Steel Corporation from 41 million dollars in 1939 to 102 millions in 1940; British total profits and interest, according to the Government return, from £1,178 million in 1938 to £1,540 in 1940); so deep distrust spreads of the ruling class on both sides, of a Halifax no less than a Hitler, of the theatrical declamations of the scion of the House of Marlborough no less than of the ranting son of the blacksmith; of all their highflown appeals, glib patriotism protecting profits, and threadbare promises of a new order. There is not yet political clearness; but in the face of concrete experience, with the gulf of class divisions deepened and in every sphere more shameless and glaring in the midst of the hardships of war (food, air raid protection, taxation, army organisation, the suppression of the popular press) there is a wide and growing elementary class feeling, a sense of the opposition of class interests, *a breakdown of confidence in the ruling class.*

THE conviction begins to spread among wide numbers that the ruling class of no side and of no country can offer any hope of a solution of the problems which world development has placed on the order of the day; that they can offer only extending crisis, savagery and servitude, whether through endlessly prolonged war (Lord Halifax speaks now of twenty years), or through a false and temporary peace of the oppressors, which can only lead to new conflicts and antagonisms, and new forms of war on the workers, on socialism and eventually on the Soviet Union. As this conviction spreads, as the people see no way from their sufferings through the present rulers, as the entire populations of five sixths of the planet are becoming drawn more and more directly into the war machine, as intolerable burdens are laid on their backs, so the stirring of the people begins. Churchill is no longer the unquestioned national idol. The victories of Hitler bring no elation of the German people. The disillusionment at the present stage may show itself in many elementary and even contradictory forms and moods; the beginnings of active struggle are still only partial and limited. It may show itself only in the initial form of cynicism, which is to-day widespread; the complete distrust in all official statements and communiqués, and in the competence or disinterestedness of the upper class authorities. It may show itself sometimes in moods of sullen despair, pessimism or fatalism. It may show itself sometimes in impotent pacifist yearnings, in war-weariness, or in furious indignation

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which finds no vent. These are moods which can become the starting point of awakening, but in themselves contain the seed of danger, opening the way to fascist misuse and distortion of the anger of the people. But among the awakening minority there develops the growing determination to act, to struggle in the common cause of the working people, to organise the struggle of the people, in order to change the present situation in the only way in which it can be effectively changed in the interests of the people, by changing the direction of affairs, by exerting their will and influence on the event, by winning the power of government. Herein lies the hope of the future.

THE GREATEST responsibility now rests on the militant working class, on the politically conscious workers, to give leadership in this urgent situation; to understand the present stage of mass consciousness, to show the only way forward which can bring the solution of the problems before the people by the action of the people themselves; and not only to show the final solution, but to show *the next step forward* in the present concrete situation; to give concrete leadership; to organise the struggle of the working people on the basis of those mass issues which can already win the support of the overwhelming majority against the big propertied interests and vested interests which stand in the way of the urgent needs of the people and are bringing them to ruin; and thus to build up the class front of the workers, the broad front of all sections of the people, which can alone, by its advancing strength and mass activity, make real and practical the question of a change of government, and thus lead the way to the final solution of the present crisis in the interests of the people Never was the need greater for Marxism, for the politically conscious workers who bear the fate of the working class and the people in their hands, to stand out as the leaders of the people in this hour of crisis, and to build up the mighty common front of the people, which can alone save them from disaster. This is the call of May Day in this second year of war. The call of May Day to the workers to unite is no traditional repetition of time-honoured slogans. It is a call whose urgency is greater than ever to-day, a call to life against death.

FOR THE people of this country the call to action in the present situation is especially urgent. Military reverses and economic disorganisation, the destruction of cities in an inferno of frenzied fury of the dying capitalist order, the looming outlines of threatening starvation, are a hard school, in which the crimes of the rulers are paid for by the sufferings of the people. But it is a school which teaches. Its lessons tear illusions and blast through miles of red tapes, rosewater communiqués, official optimism and bland Front Bench co-operation to deceive the people. In their lives and bodies the people are learning the price of tolerating the continued power of the present ruling class. Drugged and doped, not merely during these last few weeks, but for years, for a whole generation, for all these twenty-five years since the first world war and the opening of the general crisis of capitalism, with false hopes and promises and illusions,

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equally under the bland emptiness of a Macdonald or a Baldwin, the complacency of a Chamberlain, or the rhetoric of a Churchill, all covering the same ruthless, conscienceless, bankrupt and degenerate ruling class of money-making parasites in the charge of the destinies of a nation, to-day, under the blows which rain upon them, the people are awakening on the edge of catastrophe.

THE FIRST great wave of popular indignation and awakening spread already last summer after the experiences of Norway and Dunkerque. But this wave was still only directed against a section of the ruling class, against Chamberlain and the Men of Munich, who were seen as the immediate authors of the misfortunes which had fallen on the people. Churchill was hastily put forward by the ruling gang in place of Chamberlain, and was proclaimed the national idol. By every device of publicity and flattery the great bubble of the Churchill reputation was inflated to become the mascot for the ugly visage of finance-capital. All his previous record as the arch-enemy of the people, as the leader of reaction, as the imperialist adventurer and gambler with blood and treasure and hero of a hundred fiascoes, was covered over; of Sydney Street and Gallipoli, of the ruthless crushing of the General Strike, of the war on the Soviet Union, of the crusade against Indian freedom, of the leadership of Die-hard Toryism, of the eulogies of Mussolini and fascism, of the Finland adventure, of the full and equal complicity in the Norway fiasco which brought down Chamberlain, were covered over and assumed to be forgotten by the fickle public memory. The Labour Party and Trade Union Congress leaders joined the Government to stem the tide of public anger, and joined in the flood of servile adulation of the new hero of the labour movement. The fact that only the figurehead had been changed, that the same dark forces, the same Tory machine, the same ruling forces of the finance-capitalist remained in control, was adroitly hidden.

TO-DAY the wave of anger goes deeper, as the issues go deeper. If the Churchill mascot fails, if the same disasters, corruption, profiteering, incompetence and mismanagement go forward under the new regime as the old, then it becomes no longer so easy for the ruling class to find a new alibi or hide behind another mask; it begins to become clear to wide sections of thinking people that the sickness goes deeper and requires more drastic remedies. To-day the anger of the people begins to be directed more and more clearly against the whole class which Churchill represents, whose rule is destroying the standards, rights and existence of the people. The anger is no longer only the reflection of a temporary situation or temporary reverses; it is interwoven with the deep social and economic discontent against the regime of class oppression, against the inequalities of sacrifice, the scandal of the food situation, the unjust taxation, the neglect of the needs of the people, the crushing of small business by the combines, the conscription of labour and not of wealth, the destruction of popular rights, the betrayal of the aims of the labour movement.

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TO-DAY the anger develops in the midst of a new international situation, as part of an international stirring of the people, developing all over the world as the war extends over the world; reflected in the rising movements for national liberation of the oppressed nations in Europe; in the advance of the national movement in India, and of the heroic war of liberation of the Chinese people; in the mighty strike movement and struggle of the people against participation in the war in the United States, and the growing unrest of the labour movement in Australia; in the ever more powerful independent role of the Soviet Union, upholding the cause of socialism and of peace, at the head of the struggle of the workers and peoples of all countries. It is in this international situation of the beginnings of stirring and advance of the popular forces all over the world that the crisis in Britain develops. In this international awakening of the peoples, the working people of Britain, where the contradictions of declining imperialism are finding especially sharp expression, have a great role to play.

FOR twenty years we have traced in this journal the deepening crisis which confronts the people of this country, consequent on the loss of the old capitalist world monopoly, and the resulting imperative necessity of a radical social transformation, a socialist revolution, as the condition of the continued existence of the forty-five millions in these islands. Year by year the gulf between the decaying propertied interests which would not release their grip, and the existence and life-needs of the people has grown sharper. To-day this crisis reaches an extreme point. Already with the first transition of capitalism to the era of imperialist decline, Engels gave warning of this outlook for the British people, and predicted the time when, with the inevitable collapse of the nineteenth century world monopoly of British capitalism before the more rapid tempo of development of German and American capitalism, the British working class would finally be faced with the alternatives: "Starve or Rebel." To-day the meaning of these prophetic words of Engels is begining to take concrete shape for millions who may have never heard of the teachings of Marx or of Engels. Under the conditions of this war, which is itself the outcome of this imperialist antagonism and of the policies of the ruling class, the spectre of starvation begins to draw grimly closer. It is no Marxist, but the foremost elder statesman of the bourgeoisie, Lloyd George, who now declares, in April, 1941, of the propertied interests of this country (he was speaking of the great landlords, but the landowning, financial and big capitalist interests in this country are now, in fact, completely interlocked) that "these reactionaries would rather run the risk of starvation—which means defeat—than surrender their privileges." No longer under the slow decay of the first decades of the imperialist era, no longer under the chronic depression and mass unemployment of the post-war era, no longer under the scourge of the world economic crisis, but in the harsh school of war, in which American and German imperialism are mercilessly squeezing between them the weaker British rival, these issues are advancing to their climax.

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THE British ruling class, secure, complacent and parasitic with their accumulated wealth and colonial possessions and the plunder of one quarter of the world, made no attempt to adapt themselves to the changed conditions; made no attempt to reconstruct the economy of the country; let agriculture fall into decay; let the basic industries fall into decay; made no attempt to advance productive technique, or scientific and technical training, to the level of German and American technique; but continued to live richly on the profits of colonial exploitation and the financial commissions of the City of London as still the financial centre ofthe world. Instead of constructive advance, they sought to pursue their age-old traditional policy of striking down the rival German imperialism, as they had struck down the power of Spain, as they had struck down the power of Holland, as they had built their coalition to checkmate and defeat eighteenth century France, as they had built their coalition to strike down Napoleon. So in the twentieth century they built their coalition to strike down German imperialism, and, when their coalition was ready, entered on the first world war.

THEY won the first world war; they dismembered Germany, imposed the crippling Treaty of Versailles on German capitalism, seized its colonies and shipping, deprived it of its main sources of iron ore, imposed on it the burden of reparations. But it was a Pyrrhic victory. They could not change the tempo of capitalist development. Varga has shown in his article on "The Imperialist Struggle for a New Redivision of the World," printed in the *Labour Monthly* for November, 1940, how German capitalism had completely outstripped British in every decisive sphere of production by 1913, and how once again it had still more heavily outstripped it by 1938. By the war they had enormously increased the strength of American capitalism, while still further weakening British capitalism. Above all, the first world war had led to the first victory of the world socialist revolution. For fear of the socialist revolution, the British capitalists hastened to rebuild the power of German capitalism, and to restore the very forces which they had gone through four years of war to strike down. In hostility to the Socialist Soviet Union they helped to rebuild the armed military, naval and air strength of their German imperialist rival, in the hope that those arms would be turned and used up against the Soviet Union. How that plan ended in fiasco is familiar history. The expression of that fiasco was the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact. In haste the British imperialists, dragging their now hopelessly weakened French partners with them, sought again to cut the knot of their dilemmas with the sword of war. They declared war on Germany, but this time against a far stronger German imperialism, and no longer with the network of allies they had so laboriously built up in 1914. The war of 1939 could no longer repeat the war of 1914.

THE Anglo-French imperialists entered light-heartedly into the war of 1939, without either serious preparation or strategic plan. That was the period—only twenty months ago, but it seems a vanished age, so great is the gulf between—of masterly inactivity; bombastic boasting of the

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vast resources of the British and French Empires and the inevitable crack-up of Germany ("time is on our side"); grandiloquent discussions as to what should be done with Germany and what kind of regime should be set up there; serious concern still only with the front against the Soviet Union and Communism; and the final megalomania of the Finland expedition and Baku preparations to take on simultaneously the Soviet Union and Germany. The events of the spring and summer of 1940 blew these pipe-dreams into the air. The smashing of the Mannerheim line and Soviet-Finnish peace; the collapse of the Norway expedition; the German thrust to the West; the evacuation of Dunkerque, and the collapse of France ended the first period of the war with ignominy for the British imperialists. The war which had been entered on so light-heartedly as a preliminary canter to the basic anti-Soviet aims was revealed as full, grim imperialist war, far more serious than 1914. The "wrong war" had become the real war. Chamberlain fell, and was replaced by Churchill. An age ended, and a new and deeper phase of the crisis of British imperialism opened under Churchill.

THE transition from Chamberlain to Churchill was the transition to full-scale, grim, desperate knock-out imperialist war, in which the changed relations of world power had at last become apparent to the complacent tradition-soaked foreigner-despising sahibs of British imperialism, and their resources were now to be strained to the utmost. The basic disparity of strength of British and German imperialism could no longer be concealed. Already by 1938 German steel production was 23 million tons, against British 10 million tons and 19 millions for the British Empire. By the first phase of the war, in the spring of 1940, Germany and the States it now dominated - Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland - had a peacetime steel capacity of 31 million tons against the 29 millions of the British Empire, France and Belgium. With the transfer of French and Belgian resources to the German side, the German total now reached 42 million tons against the British 10 million tons or the British Empire's 19 million tons (half requiring overseas transport.). This index is only a partial measure of the disparity of productive resources, technical equipment and effectively mobilised labour. It is less than a measure of the disparity of arms resources and arms construction equipment. All the fervid appeals to the British workers to "go to it," for the crippling overwork of the British workers, outnumbered by the German workers two to one and more like six to one by the European workers now compelled to labour under the control of German imperialism, could not conceal or miraculously transform this disparity, and the consequent crisis into which the policy and diplomacy of the British ruling class had landed the people.

IN the face of this disparity, and the grim perspective which it foreboded, Churchill had only one hope and one plan to restore the balance and continue the war—the aid of the United States. To this aim everything was subjected. Strategic possessions, which would have

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been previously defended against an aggressor with limitless blood and treasure as lifelines of Empire, were surrendered without a struggle. The resources and the future labour of the British people were mortgaged to the American millionaires by the subtle provisions of the Lease-Lend Act, which were cunningly devised to avoid the previous error of accepting worthless paper bonds and I.O.U.s.* The accumulated overseas resources of British capitalism began to be step by step liquidated, not only in America, but beyond, under the relentless pressure of the Wall Street creditors—at first with many crafty devices of evasion and pleas of empty pockets by the British debtors, and extending only to the holdings of small investors, but gradually reaching out to the big trust holdings, as in the demonstrative sale of Courtaulds' subsidiary, the American Viscose Corporation, for £20,000,000, on the day before the passing of the long delayed Lease-Lend Act ("it is indeed a sad event" —Economist, 22/3/41). No Fifth Column worked harder or with more lavish resources in any country than the pro-British war propaganda in the United States. The real director of British foreign policy, the old Munichite Halifax, while continuing a member of the War Cabinet, passed to Washington. In his earlier speeches Churchill openly envisaged the possibility of abandoning the island "subjugated and starving" while the imperialist bourgeoisie would betake themselves to the New World to continue the struggle. In preparation the bourgeaisie busily set themselves to transfer their wealth, their families and even whole industries and plants to Canada and the United States. The British Empire was to be saved for its wealthy exploiters, whatever the sacrifice to be imposed on the British people, and even though the Empire was only to survive as the junior partner of the rising American imperialism. Such was the Churchill plan.

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* It is very widely, and far too easily, assumed in this country that the problem (of repayment) will never arise in any serious form, that the apparatus of leasing and lending is merely a provisional substitute for an ultimate free gift. Such an assumption does not arise solely from that natural arrogance of which the British are so frequently accused; it is the logical conclusion to be drawn from the whole tenor of the discussion in the United States, with its emphasis on the self-interest that America has in the support of British resistance.

But it is not the intention of Congress that the munitions and materials to be supplied are to be regarded as a gift. It is not the intention, even, of the majority who have passed the Bill, as can be seen from the suggestion made by Senator George, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and one of the Bill's sponsors, that British tin and rubber resources should be pledged against ultimate repayment. It should be remembered that the money borrowings of the last war were widely believed, at the time they were incurred, to be merely a formality to be turned into a gift after the Armistice. But it did not turn out so, and the British public may be making an equal mistake this time if it refuses to adopt any but the most optimistic assumption. It is a great advantage to have moved the argument from the monetary plane to that of goods; but that may turn out to be the only change.

If repayment is ever required, it must not be supposed that the United States will be so foolish as to accept large quantities of obsolete military equipment. Payment, if it is to be made, will have to be made in goods useful in peace-time, and the goods that will come first into question will be precisely those raw material resources on which Senator George's eye has already lighted, together with such additional things as shares in African mines and Latin American utilities.

Economist, 15/3/41.

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We have had one year of the Churchill Plan. The position has become more serious. With the fiasco in the Balkans the domination of German imperialism becomes complete throughout the Continent of Europe this side of the U.S.S.R. The threat to Gibraltar (with the open Axis sympathies of the Franco fascist Government, despite the pouring out of millions of British money even in these last few weeks to what is at the moment the most violent and bloody fascist terror in Europe), alongside the advance in Northern Africa and threat to Egypt and Suez, raises the question of control of the Mediterranean, the weakening of the lines of communication of the Empire and the opening of the way to the thrust to the Middle East, the old ground of contention of British and German imperialism. It is evident that the success of such a thrust, which will certainly be powerfully contested (the Balkans having only represented an advance-guard action from the point of view of British imperialism), would not only mean the heaviest blow to the basis of the Empire, but would for the first time establish German imperialism in possession of an effectively self-sufficient economic area also in respect of oil, and thus break the blockade. At the same time the Battle of the Atlantic grows more severe; and, while the weekly figures of shipping losses have now been discontinued since it became more severe, it is sufficiently manifest from the urgent tone of ministerial utterances, from their varied, contradictory, alternately reassuring, alternately alarmist character, that the position is serious and that the prospect for food supplies and for the economic situation of this country, no less than for the arrival of the American arms and material, is grave enough to cause anxious concern.

But what of the American aid? No figures, no estimate or even approximate indication is given of the real volume of American aid that is actually arriving. It is known and freely admitted that in the conditions of modern technique the interval between planning and effective peak production in the switching over of economy to war production has to be calculated in years rather than months, quite apart from the intricate social and political problems involved in the organisation of labour, the concentration of industry and the introduction of compulsory measures to prevent the workers winning their due advantage from boom conditions. The general tone of ministerial utterances once again makes clear that the actual aid received is still very limited and partial; while the date of expectation of its becoming effective is treated with considerable elasticity in different statements and put off to an uncertain future. The suspicion has even been expressed from the British side that "while the British War Office is busy winning the last war, the American War Office is busy preparing for the next" (Economist, 3/2/41). On the other hand, following the news of British reverses, controversy has waxed high in the United States whether Britain, after having been used to the full for a certain stage of the conflict, as Britain previously used its Continental allies, must not now be accounted a bad loss, with consequent revision of their calculations by the American financiers.

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WITHIN the circles of the British ruling class there is no less controversy and division of opinion, which is only held back from public expression for fear of the masses and of unloosing full and open political crisis. At the heart of such controversy lies inevitably the dilemma of imperialist peace or war, which now confronts British imperialism in a sharp form and presents either way the sharpest problems. Either way reveals the bankruptcy of the present position of the ruling class. The rejection of peace proposals in September, 1939, and again in the summer of 1940 does not make the question of such proposals easier now. If suggestions had been put forward in exalted circles for the consideration of the possibilities of a negotiated peace with Hitler at the present stage, and if such suggestions have been associated with particular leading names, it is evident that in the conditions of war discipline such tendencies will not be likely to find public expression (any more than in official expression in France right up to the very moment of the change-over) until the decisive change in ruling class policy has in fact taken place. The views of such a military critic as Liddell Hart on the impossibility of victory, and the previous line of Lloyd George on peace proposals will be recalled.

THERE is no doubt that among important sections, not only of the hard core of the old pro-Fascist grouping who have always held the view of the "wrong war," but of wider elements who pursue a normally opportunist imperialist policy, the question has been canvassed of the possibility of a negotiated settlement at the present stage, or imperialist peace with Hitler on the basis of the retention of existing gains on both sides, as the best way out of a bad situation. But against such tendencies the dominant sections see clearly, not only that such a peace would in fact be equivalent to a defeat, and a very temporary and uneasy truce, but that the present moment would be in fact the most unfavourable for such a suggestion, when British imperialism has no effective cards in its hands for bargaining. This does not mean that such questions may not come prominently to the front in the near future; but this would require a considerable re-grouping of forces in the ruling class. The position of Churchill has been weakened by recent events and the working out of his policy; but it is not easy for the ruling class to find an alternative. While rapid changes remain possible, the prospective still points rather to the heavy extension and prolongation of the war; and American imperialism exerts its powerful influence in this direction.

IN this critical stage of the imperialist war the whole question of the relations of imperialism and the Soviet Union is inevitably sharpened. We must never forget the warnings of Ercoli at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in 1935:

> "No one can doubt that the coming war, even if it were to begin as a war between two big imperialist Powers or as a war of a big Power against a small country, will inevitably tend to develop into and will inevitably become a war against the Soviet Union."

As the war extends, as the difficulties of the imperialists grow more inextricable, so this issue comes more sharply to the front; they see in it more

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and more the hoped-for solution of their problems; ever sharper vigilance is necessary. But while this ultimate outcome of the conflict of imperialism and world socialism, arising finally from the world imperialist war, and this ultimate line of imperialist policy, must always be clearly held in view in any analysis of the forces of the world situation, this does not mean that such an outcome is by any means inevitable at a given moment as the next step in the development of the war. Here the counterposing forces of the strength and peace policy of the Soviet Union, no less than the support and solidarity of the working people in all countries and in both imperialist camps towards the land of socialism, are able to play their part.

THERE is no doubt that all sections of the British ruling class, and the dominant forces of the Anglo-American coalition looked hopefully, and with the customary wishful thinking, to the prospect of a conflict between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union as a consequence of the drive of German imperialism towards the Middle East, just as a short time ago they looked hopefully to the possipility of a successful policy of appeasement with Japan (the period of the closing of the Burma Road) and the driving of Japanese expansion northwards. "The appearance in the British and American press during the past days of an unusually large number of fictitious statements about the worsening of relations between the U.S.S.R. and Germany is significant" (*Pravda* 19. 4. 41). When Churchill referred directly in his speech of April 9 to the prospect of "a Nazi attempt to secure the granary of the Ukraine and the oilfields of the Caucasus," he was evidently holding out an invitation to Hitler. From the point of view of the British imperialists such a solution of their problems would be undoubtedly pleasant. They might well issue their covert invitation to Hitler: "By all means attack the Ukraine and the Caucasus; this will ease the strain of the imperialist war for us; we shall watch your efforts with benevolence, and perhaps even we may find on this basis the road to a peace of mutual advantage in the name of the unity of Western civilisation and the ending of the suicidal destructive war of the forces of civilisation." This would be the old policy of the "switch" in a new dress. Has not the Pope issued his call for "a rapid peace," and given instructions for prayers for peace through the month of May?

BUT HERE also the hopes of the British imperialists meet with difficulties. Certainly every extension of the war, and especially around the borders of the Soviet Union, increases the dangers for the Soviet Union against which it is necessary to be prepared. But it does not follow from this that the German imperialists, who are ruthless, but also skilful calculators, and not crazy, will necessarily oblige their British rivals by at this moment taking on the power of the Soviet Union, whose strength Hitler very well understands, while they have still to finish with the British Empire. The main danger rather arises from the possibility of sharp and sudden turns of the imperialist war, from the collapse of either side and

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re-formation of the fronts, or a reactionary deal; and especially from the extension of the war around the borders of the Soviet Union and the massing of the main imperialist forces of both camps in those regions.

CERTAINLY the extension of the war to the Balkans and the destruction of the independence of the Balkan peoples was an unfavourable development from the standpoint of the interests of the peoples and of world peace. Had the Soviet offer to Bulgaria last November for a Pact of Mutual Assistance been accepted by the reactionary Bulgarian ruling class, as the Bulgarian people wished, this development would never have taken place, and the Balkan peoples would to-day be independent. But the most serious responsibility for this situation lies with British imperialism, which, in place of exercising its influence in support of such a common stand with the Soviet Union, which would have ensured the independence of the Balkan peoples, put forward instead its fanciful plan for an alternative alliance of the Balkan States and Turkey, because of its hostility and negative attitude to the Soviet Union, and because it was primarily interested, not in the independence of the Balkan peoples, but in the development of a war front in the Balkans at the expense of the Balkan peoples. Thereby they surrendered Bulgaria to Hitler. Once Bulgaria was lost, it was too late to save Jugoslavia and Greece, and the war of liberation of those two peoples had to undergo temporary defeat. But the stand of the Soviet Union in unity with the sympathies of the Balkan peoples, the popular movement in Jugoslavia bringing down the Government of capitulation and leading to the establishment of the Simovitch Government and the Pact of Non-Aggression with the Soviet Union, recognising for five years ahead the independence of Jugoslavia on the eve of the German aggression, and the stimulus to the spirit of popular resistance of all the Balkan peoples in their own cause, will bear fruit in the future developments.

SIMILARLY in the Far East the Soviet Pact of Neutrality with Japan not only represents a victory against the aggressive designs and ceaseless anti-Soviet provocations and attempted hostilities of the Japanese militarists; it also represents a signal victory against the plans of the reactionary circles of Anglo-American imperialism, which sought to drive Japanese expansion northwards, as they had previously planned to drive German Nazi expansion to the East. It erects a barrier in this sphere of possible extension of the war. Thereby at the same time it strengthens the hands of the Soviet Union to aid the national struggle of liberation of the Chinese people, and provides a strengthening and encouragement to all the popular forces of the Chinese national liberation movement, by this demonstration of the victory and strength of the Soviet Union against Japanese aggression, to carry forward to victory their own struggle against Japanese aggression. Thus in every sphere the present important new developments and successes of the basic policy of the Soviet Union, in the midst of a complex international situation, strengthen the struggle of the peoples in all countries for the victory of their own cause, for national liberation, and for peace.

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IT IS in this international situation that the present crisis places the sharpest issues before the British people. They have to form their judgment whether the present policies of any section of the ruling class can offer them any hope of a solution of the problems with which they are faced. They have to draw their urgent conclusions for action. The more the situation is examined, the more it is manifest that neither in the issues of peace or war, nor in the urgent question of economy and organisation on the home front, nor in the political field of democratic rights and functioning, nor in the now newly rising questions of the social order after the war, can any hope be placed in the present ruling class or in the leadership which has entered into coalition with them. It is evident that at the stage now reached, with the basic issues opened out by the fully developing world war, neither an imperialist peace of the British reactionaries and pro-fascists with Hitler, if such were possible, a peace of the oppressors against the peoples, an open counter-revolutionary movement to suppress the rising movement of the peoples, a prelude to new war, nor the prolongation of the war to limitless world destruction and barbarism for reactionary imperialist aims, leading through an ocean of bloodshed and misery to an alternative type of imperialist peace and a new cycle of imperialist crisis, antagonisms and war, can represent the aims and interests of the people. The aims of the people must be directed to the speediest winning of peace, but a peace based on the freedom of all peoples, made by the peoples themselves and leading to the fraternal collaboration of all peoples. The entire experience of imperialism has demonstrated that such a peace can never be made by the imperialists, but only by the people themselves. The conditions of such a peace is the victory of the people within each country.

THE FIRST task before the working people of this country is the organisation of their own common front of struggle in order to defend their vital interests, win back the democratic rights which have been taken from them and advance to win the direction of affairs from the reactionaries and corrupt class forces whose condemnation stands written in the records of these past decades and in the present crisis. The breaking of the policy of coalition with the enemies of the people, the independence of the working class organisations, the fulfilment of the role of working class leadership for all sections of the people against the big propertied and financial interests, and the winning of power into the hands of the people—these are the tasks to-day. Only so can the reactionary imperialist aims and oppression of other peoples, which only serve to prolong the war, be ended. Only so can the disorganisation, inequalities, corruption and profiteering, which prevent the real defence of the people, begin to be tackled. Only so can the defence of the people be organised on a through-and-through democratic basis, enlisting the enthusiasm and active participation of the masses. Only so can the appeal of the people reach out with an honest and trusted voice to the rising movement of the peoples in the other countries and win them as allies in the common cause.

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THE SIGNIFICANCE of the present stirring of the people in this country, the beginnings of questioning and criticism of the Churchill Coalition Government, and the discontent with the reactionary class policies pursued against the people, lies precisely in the fact that it begins to make it possible to mobilise the struggle of the people in their own cause; to organise the common front in the elementary struggle against the big propertied interests which exploit and oppress them; to tear down the illusions which still tie the workers to the Government and the Coalition Labour leaders; and to raise sharply the cardinal question before the people of this country, the question of Government and of the class forces which must constitute a real Government of the people. On this May Day, in the demonstrations on May Day and in the coming weeks, the voice of the working people must make itself heard. Let this May Day see the beginning of a great mobilisation of the working people in these coming critical months; the powerful advance of the People's Convention Movement; the growth of the united working class front; the fight for the needs of the people, for the restoration of the *Daily Worker*, for the restoration of working class and democratic rights; and so advancing, with the advance of the crisis, to the capacity to challenge the ruling class forces and establish a new Government representative of the people, which alone will be able to tackle the urgent tasks raised by the present crisis.

R.P.D.

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The Call of May Day

BY WILLIAM RUST

REVOLUTION means rivers of blood, the devastation of the large towns and starvation by blockade. Such fearful warnings have been drummed into the ears of the British workers for years on end; it has been the stock-in-trade propaganda of all those who sought to divert the workers from the path of revolution and to hold them in submission to the policies of the imperialist ruling class.

And now these dread prophecies are coming true---the bloodshed, the devastation and the hunger. But it is not the policy of class struggle that has brought these horrors on the people, it is not revolution that is the cause of this monstrous suffering. The rulers, who are utterly incapable of guiding the social forces and who have become degenerate and corrupt, have succeeded in bringing about this modern barbarism only because the workers are not united on the basis of the class struggle, and are not using revolutionary means in order to usher in the great social changes which history is demanding.

Much has been shattered by the war. Above all, the illusion that capitalism, under the benign guidance of the Labour leaders, would gradually level up the inequalities between the classes and peacefully evolve into Socialism. Choose the bomb or the ballot box declared the spokesmen of reformism. History has given a fearful answer. Reliance on the ballot box has brought the bomb.

On this second May Day of the imperialist war, the traditional day of international working class solidarity, the thought of millions will turn to the fundamental questions of to-day and the problem of the way out for the working class. Never was it more necessary that the policy of class struggle and class unity, in war as in peace, should be proclaimed than at this moment when the war is entering its grimmest phase and the British people face the greatest crisis in their long history.

[redacted] May 1st, 1940, the conditions of the phoney war were still pre- [redacted] the extension of the war to Norway and Denmark was [redacted] battles that were to end with the withdrawal at [redacted] France. In a stirring manifesto, which ripped

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On May 1st, 1940, the conditions of the phoney war were still prevailing, although the extension of the war to Norway and Denmark was already heralding the battles that were to end with the withdrawal at Dunkirk and the fall of France. In a stirring manifesto, which ripped aside the nauseous and deceitful propaganda of the capitalists and the Labour leaders, the Communist International pointed to the increasing enslavement of the workers and foretold the future course of the war:

> "Yet another war base is being prepared in the Near East. The struggle of the imperialist powers for the Balkans and for supremacy in the Mediterranean threatens to draw additional capitalist states into the war. Preparations to intervene in the war are being made by Italy . . . the capitalist miscreants are dragging the peoples into a new world imperialist carnage."

Present events have shown only too clearly the deadly accuracy of this prediction.

Contrast the clarity of analysis and depth of feeling for the cause of the people expressed in this manifesto of the Communist International with

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the blindness, self-satisfaction and indifference to the fate of the masses displayed by those Labour leaders who were loudest in their warnings against the bloodshed and starvation of revolution.

Last May Day Sir Walter Citrine stood in the witness box of the Royal Courts of Justice giving evidence in support of his libel action against the *Daily Worker*. When asked if he had brought before the International Federation of Trade Unions the proposal that the united power of all the unions should be used to bring the war to an end, this Labour leader burst into laughter at what he considered an absurdity. Citrine who had such little faith in the power of the trade unions also said "I cannot conceive" that the British capitalists will impose conditions on the workers similar to those embodied in the French industrial decrees:

> "Sir Walter went on to say: I cannot conceive that this sacrifice about which Mr. Pritt is asking, will ever be introduced into this country, and I do not think that anybody will ever suggest it for the British worker.
> "Mr. Pritt: Do you say that it is a completely unlikely contingency?—I do.
> "Mr. Pritt: I suggest to you that if the war lasts another eighteen months, it is not only likely, but inevitable that things like this will be introduced on this scale.—I disagree absolutely."
>
> ("Daily Worker," May 1st, 1940).

Pritt was right and Citrine wrong. Actually the decrees came even earlier than Pritt suggested. In eight months, not eighteen. In the light of these trial proceedings the fact that the introduction of industrial conscription and the suppression of the *Daily Worker* took place on the same day, January 21st, 1941, should not be regarded as a coincidence!

One year ago the Labour leaders were not yet in the Government, although their entry was being prepared. The decision was taken on May 10th and endorsed three days later by the Bournemouth Conference of the Labour Party, to which Professor Harold Laski delivered a grandiose speech promising Socialism, not after the war but already now, as a result of "planning." On this May Day we can celebrate one year of Laski Socialism. His chickens have already come home to roost.

An enormous strengthening of the power of monopoly capitalism and the swallowing up of the small man. Conscription of labour but no conscription of wealth. Unashamed profiteering and financial scandals on such a large scale that they cannot be concealed. All the demands contained in the Home Policy adopted by the conference have been flouted by the Government. The Keynes Plan has been introduced through the back door—more than two-thirds (£231,000,000) of the additional taxes imposed by the new Budget will be paid by the poorer taxpayers. The food shortage has become acute in the industrial districts while luxury feeding continues unchecked among the well-to-do, and no attempt is made to solve the food problem, caused by the blockade, through the large-scale development of agriculture. Democratic rights have been whittled down in all directions; the right to strike has gone and compulsory transference of labour has been introduced. The only working class newspaper has been closed down.

These are the fruits of one year of Socialism à la Laski. And this starving of the body and chaining of the mind has all been done in the name of the "successful prosecution of the war." With what result? The

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situation was never graver than it is to-day. "For one more year the problem of Britain is not how to win the war but how not to lose it," writes the *Economist* (April 19). The people have been led by the nose. Inflated victories in Northern Africa turned out to be but the prelude to serious defeats. The propaganda about the "problem of the night bomber is being successfully dealt with" was followed by the heaviest blitz on record. It is at last revealed that the Battle of the Atlantic has reached the stage of crisis.

The Churchill Government no less than the Chamberlain Government has endangered the independence of the British people by its reckless imperialist policies, its military adventurism and hostility to the Soviet Union. By their subservience to the banks and big trusts at the expense of the standards of the people, Churchill and the Labour leaders are sapping the living forces of the people; through their control of the press, to be seen in both the suppression and distortion of news, they are creating a demoralisation comparable to what took place in France.

To-day there is a widespread uneasiness amongst the people and a lack of confidence in this much-boosted Churchill Government. The prestige of the Government has fallen heavily and war-weariness has spread with astonishing rapidity. The conviction is growing that the continuance and spreading of the war offers no way out.

But this mood has yet to be turned into a policy of militant action, of working class unity, of proletarian internationalism. It still expresses resignation, a lack of confidence in the power of the working class to change the world, "to end the war after its own fashion, in its own interests, in the interests of the whole of labouring mankind." These words of Dimitrov express the May Day spirit, that fighting determination that must come to the top everywhere this year.

There is, of course, no doubt that the mass movement is stronger this May Day than it was last. The war has hardened the workers and has aroused large numbers from their political sluggishness. Class consciousness is on a higher level. It is estimated that the trade unions have enrolled at least a million new members, and although the inner life of the trade unions has declined there is a marked increase in the activity and influence of shop stewards. There have been a large number of small strikes of short duration. In the armed forces millions of young workers are imbibing experiences and gaining knowledge that are equipping them for the class struggle as well as the battlefield.

Moreover, many workers are sceptical, they have no enthusiasm for the war and they are certain that its final outcome will in any case be detrimental to their interests. Never did propaganda fall on stonier ground than the propaganda about the "new world" after the war. The compulsory savings scheme of the latest Budget, called the provision of a "nest egg," is regarded as the final confirmation that the new world will kick-off complete with mass unemployment and the means test. Ministerial suggestions that the Government should remain in office for at least three years after the war in the interests of "national unity" have increased the feeling that far from there being a new world that there

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will only be an old gang clinging to office and guarding the moneybags and privileges of those who have done well out of the war.

These striving and views are the signs of the mass movement that is now coming into action, a movement that the ruling class and the Labour leaders will do everything in their power to check and crush.

This has been clearly demonstrated by the violence of the attack on the People's Convention, which represents a striving to establish a movement, which would unite, on a broad platform, people who hold varying views about the war and other questions. The strategy of this attack and the division of labour that took place is now clearly to be seen. Firstly, the *Daily Worker* was suppressed, thus leaving the Convention without a voice in the daily press. Secondly, the Convention was denounced both by the capitalist press and the Rights and "Lefts" of the Labour Party as a Communist plot and a pro-Hitler movement. Thirdly, attempts were made by various methods of social pressure (*e.g.*, the B.B.C. ban on the Convention artists) to detach supporters. Fourthly, the National Council of Labour proceeded to the wholesale expulsion of individuals and organisations which supported the Convention.

A mass movement can grow only in the course of struggle; there is no royal road to victory. The People's Convention has had to fight hard against big odds and whatever the effects of the blow it has received there is no doubt that its scars are honourable and that it has come through successfully. The distortions of its policy were firmly rebutted and the artists created a great public sensation by standing firm and beating the B.B.C. The People's Convention has become a lasting factor in the political life of this country and its very mention arouses enthusiasm at public meetings. The idea of the People's Convention, the feeling that with the passing of Labour leaders into coalition with Churchill that the creation of a rallying centre of a progressive character is absolutely necessary, has taken a firm hold. The conception of a People's Government and a People's Peace has awakened the imagination of large numbers.

The strongest barrier to the growth of the People's Convention is still the expulsion policy of the Labour leadership, their traditional method of cutting off the militants from the masses and thus weakening the Labour movement. In France this policy advanced to the point, where, unable to expel militants from trade unions because of their overwhelming influence they resorted instead to the closing down of trade unions by the police. Over six hundred were closed in this way. Things have not reached this pass in Britain, but the prosecution of the leaders of the Manchester apprentices, at the instance of Mr. Bevin, on the grounds of the infringement of his no-strike order, is an example of the intimidatory police action to which the Labour leaders are now resorting.

A firm stand against the splitting tactics of the labour bureaucracy is one of the foremost tasks in the struggle for the united front of the working class, and there is no better way of carrying this fight to victory than untiring work in the Labour and trade union organisations, the enlivement of the trade union branches, trades councils and local labour parties. The rejection by the Co-operative Party Conference of a motion proposing

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that Communists should be ineligible for membership is a proof of the prestige won by the Communists as a result of their sturdy work for the Co-operative movement and the consequent inability of reactionary elements to start a heresy hunt.

If the militants in the local labour parties were to work more consistently and unitedly they would undoubtedly be able to make valuable progress, despite the fact that the bureaucrats of Transport House reach for a black circular or an expulsion order as soon as they spot a Left-winger, or discover that affiliated bodies are taking conference resolutions seriously and attempting to put them into practice. Militants and leaders will again come into conflict at the Whitsun Conference of the Labour Party, and although the conference will be run in the Nuremburg style (no resolutions from local bodies will be permitted to appear on the agenda), an organised stand against the reactionary policy of coalition will meet with a powerful response throughout the country.

The stand taken by the Left at the Bournemouth Conference has been confirmed by the course of events. It may well be asked, who has been proven correct, the leaders who praised Churchill and declared that they were entering the Government "as partners, not as hostages," or the delegates who declared that they had no confidence in an alliance with Churchill, the man who had supported Franco, paid tribute to Hitler, declared that Labour could not govern and had sent soldiers against the miners of South Wales? Who has been proven correct—the leaders who fawned on Leon Blum or the delegates who booed him?

History has answered Blum and the rest of his kidney who endeavoured to tar the Communists with the brush of "defeatism." It was not the policy of united working class action that led to the defeat of the French people. It was the policy of Blum, the policy of supporting one's own imperialist government, of enacting death decrees against working class fighters, that brought about the defeat and the consequent realisation of the secret aim of the French bourgeoisie to effect a union with the German bourgeoisie for the common exploitation of the French workers, whom the two hundred ruling families knew that they could not hold down without the aid of foreign bayonets.*

The lessons of France have not been lost on the workers of Britain. There can be no advance except through the unification of working class forces. All else is word spinning and empty deceit. And on this May Day, at a moment when stupendous events are taking place, we must repeat again the call for unity and for the driving forward of the struggle for peace, bread and freedom. Only in this way will the working class, learning from its own experiences and gaining confidence in its own power, be able to achieve its aims and to march forward to the ending of capitalism and the victory of Socialism.

* "Our first war aim is the crushing of Communism," said. Mde. Pomaret with the approval of her husband, M. Charles Pomaret, Minister of Labour and author of the industrial decrees. This story is told by the American journalist, Clare Boothe, in her book "European Spring."

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The Soviet Beacon

BY E. M. WINTERTON

THE IMPERIALIST groups continue at deathgrips, bringing destruction and suffering to millions. On one side of the account the Italian Empire in East Africa is all but liquidated: on the other the Balkans all but conquered by Germany. The fortunes of war in Northern Africa have changed in a short time, from balance in favour of Britain to balance in favour of Germany: but British sea power may be sufficient to change them once again. Mutual destruction of lives and national wealth continues, on the Atlantic and in the towns of both sides, without any visible end, but in ever more devastating forms. The last two great imperialist powers at present outside the conflict—the United States and Japan—hesitate on the verge of intervention, but gradually approach it, pushed by their own imperialist interests.

More small countries have fallen victims of the imperialist war. In the case of Rumania and Bulgaria, the "honours" are even. In each case a treacherous ruling class handed over the country to Germany—in the case of Rumania, owing to direct corruption of the Government by Berlin, in the case of Bulgaria thanks to the anti-Soviet policy of Great Britain which discouraged the Bulgarian Government from considering the Soviet offer of a pact of mutual assistance, even when the German menace was at the gates. In the case of Greece and Yugoslavia, the peoples, after fighting against incredible odds, have fallen victims for the time being to the German war machine in its fight to deprive the British war machine of any foothold on the European continent.

It must be pointed out that Greece, although formally it had accepted British protection, in fact during the imperialist war did its utmost to maintain neutrality: while in the case of Yugoslavia the ruling clique of Prince Paul did not even accept a formal British guarantee in the teeth of their powerful neighbours. In both cases the ruling classes resisted successfully the popular demand for an early agreement with the U.S.S.R. which could have saved them. Only in Yugoslavia did the people's revolt at the last moment give an opportunity to a section of the ruling class, anti-German and pro-British in its connections, to take power and adopt, as a last desperate expedient, a measure of rapprochement with the U.S.S.R. which the people demanded—in the shape of a pact of non-aggression and friendship. Unfortunately, this came too late to prevent the overrunning of the country.

At the time of writing, the fate of more Near Eastern small countries is in question—Egypt, dragged into the orbit of British imperialism without its people being consulted, and now possibly under the direct threat of German invasion; and Turkey, whose rulers have hesitated so long on the twin horns of an anti-German and anti-Soviet policy that it is far from clear whether they have not committed themselves irremediably.

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Outside this bloody welter is the war of the heroic Chinese people against Japanese imperialist agression, a war which has been steadily draining Japan's resources. Here too imperialist intrigue is placing the fate of the whole popular struggle in question, thanks to outside influences, almost certainly backed by American and British loans, which have encouraged Chiang Kai-Shek to attack the New Fourth Army and thus sow the seeds of civil war again.

The Soviet Union stands aside from the imperialist struggles, towering amid the warring States like a different world. Tranquil strength, peaceful constructive work, cultural intellectual and moral progress shine out from its frontiers like a beacon, and even penetrate the thick black fog of cynical lies and slanders which the entire capitalistic press of all bourgeois countries, from the *Voelkischer Beobachter* to the *New Statesman*, attempt to surround it. At the same time the Soviet Union is armed to the teeth and paying more attention daily to its armament, its workers and collective farmers are displaying a high degree of political vigilance and preparedness, and its diplomacy, though not noisy, is alert and active. It would not perhaps be out of place at this point to re-state, for the thousands of new readers whom the *Labour Monthly* has gained in the last six months, the outstanding features of the Soviet Union's foreign policy during the present war.

1. The Soviet Union is an independent Socialist State, independent precisely because it grows more powerful every day, both absolutely and relative to the warring imperialists. It has its own interests, which it pursues whether or not they coincide with those of British, German, Japanese, American or any other imperialism. Soviet interests, being rooted in the building up of a Socialist community and in the maximum retention of peace, are identical with the interests of the working class and working people generally in every other country.

2. The Soviet Union is ready to maintain friendly relations with any capitalist State which reciprocates this desire, and proves it. The Soviet Union is ready to collaborate in preventing any extension of the war. But those who reckon on the U.S.S.R. being dragged at the tail of one or other of the big capitalist groups, automatically quarrelling with one or falling into the arms of the other, are miscalculating—and doing so at their own peril.

3. The Soviet Union is willing to help peoples who really fight in defence of their national independence, or for national or social emancipation. It showed this in Spain and in China, in its offers to Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, in its six months' effort in 1939 to induce the British and French Governments to sign a pact of mutual assistance as a means of preserving European peace. It has shown it lately in the joint declaration it signed with Turkey on March 24 that, "if Turkey should be actually attacked and find herself forced to enter the war in defence of her own territory, Turkey could then, in accordance with the Soviet-Turkish Non-Aggression Pact, count on the complete understanding and neutrality of the U.S.S.R."

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4. If threatened, the Soviet Union will give back blow for blow, and does not bind itself necessarily to wait until its enemies have their blow ready (as was shown in the Finnish war of 1939-40, which was the defeat by the Soviet Union of Anglo-French plans to "switch the war").

5. Again and again, during the present war, the Soviet Union has shown its willingness to improve its relations with Great Britain; but its efforts have always broken down in face of the hostility of the British ruling class, which invariably found one pretext or another for throwing up an artificial obstacle at the critical moment of negotiations.

Recent events in Soviet relationships with other countries must be judged in the light of these principles.

One big field has been the Balkans, where the U.S.S.R. has been particularly interested in maintaining peace, if that were possible, because the small people of the Balkans are its neighbours, and because of its concern for peace in the Black Sea—and not at all because of some fancied Soviet interest in "Pan-Slavism," that reactionary propaganda which Tsarist Russia invented as the equivalent, for its own imperialist purposes, of the British "white man's burden" and the German "Nordic supremacy." There were only two main outstanding questions at issue for the Soviet Union in the Balkans when war broke out. One was the return of Bessarabia, occupied by the Rumanian landlords in 1918, and the other was the establishment of diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia. Both these questions were settled peacefully in the course of the war. During the last seven months the Soviet Union has given repeated proof, both of its concern for the Balkans, and of its unwillingness to fit in with German plans there.

On September 10 the German Ambassador in Moscow was told that the Soviet Union insists on participating in the regulation of Danube navigation; and this insistence was successful. On October 16, the Soviet Union issued an explicit repudiation of the story that it was informed beforehand about the despatch of German troops into Rumania (which had just taken place). On November 25, a special Soviet envoy offered the King of Bulgaria either a Pact of mutual assistance or a Soviet guarantee of Bulgaria against any aggressor, whichever he preferred: an offer which was rejected. On January 12, when German "tourists" were penetrating Bulgaria, the Soviet Union published a statement making plain to the Bulgarian people that this was not with Soviet knowledge or consent. On March 3, after the Bulgarian Government had yielded to Germany, the Bulgarian Minister in Moscow was given a sharp statement of Soviet disapproval of this action, as facilitating the extension of the war. On March 24 there was the joint Soviet-Turkish declaration already referred to. On April 5, the pact of neutrality and friendship was signed with Yugoslavia. A week later, when Hungary had joined in the vulture attack on Yugoslavia, it was reminded by the Soviet Government of what the consequences might be for Hungary itself, if it were likewise attacked.

Whether Turkey is to be saved will depend upon whether its rulers draw the lesson from these Soviet acts, and give up the last vestiges of

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the anti-Soviet period of their policy, in which they were associating with those sinister figures, Neville Chamberlain and Lord Halifax.

The other sphere in which the principles of Soviet foreign policy have recently won a resounding success has been in the Far East. In 1931, the Soviet Union first offered Japan a pact of non-aggression, an offer repeated several times since. Only in July 1940 did the Japanese ask for such a pact, after nine years of war on China (since 1937 on a grand scale). When it is borne in mind that since 1937 Soviet help for China, in the way of war supplies, runs into hundreds of millions of dollars, while British help has been more for Japan than for China, and American help for China has only begun in recent months on a small scale, it is obvious that the Japanese offer of July 1940 was a direct victory for Soviet policy. This is all the more striking because, in the course of later negotiations, the Soviet Union, in the first place, decided to sign only a neutrality pact with Japan (*i.e.*, covering cases of attack by third parties on either signatory) and not a full non-aggression pact; secondly because the Soviet Union, in November, 1940, refused an invitation to join the Tripartite German-Italian-Japanese Pact. The independence of Soviet policy was further underlined by the fact that on December 6, 1940, the Soviet ambassador in Japan told the Japanese Government that the Soviet attitude to China remained unchanged. In January, 1941, proof of this was given by the granting of Soviet credits to China for war supplies, totalling another $100,000,000.

But the Soviet-Japanese Pact of April 12, 1941, was also a crushing defeat for the intrigues of the other imperialist camp—Britain and the U.S.A. For years the Governments of these two countries have done their utmost to incite Japan against the U.S.S.R. When Churchill could no longer do so as openly as Chamberlain, the job fell on the Australian Prime Minister Mr. Menzies. Simultaneously *The Times*—the biggest organ of British finance-capital—has preached the advantages of such a war for Japan, and the disadvantages of its present policy, year in and year out. Such insistent advice to a country as vulnerable as Japan, backed moreover by many tangible inducements like continued oil for Japan's war against China, can only be explained by the most lamentable illusions among the ruling classes of Britain and the U.S.A. about the true strength of the U.S.S.R. Thus the attempts to incite Japan against the U.S.S.R. fall into the same category as the attempts to incite Hitler, and the Soviet-Japanese pact is a *second* stinging reminder of the true facts.

Will the British ruling class learn the lesson? There is no more sign of that than at any earlier period of the war; and the consequences will be disastrous. The British people, however, can if they have a mind visit the main burden of the disasters upon those really responsible—the British ruling class. That more and more class conscious workers are realising this, after eighteen months of imperialist war, can be seen from the decision of the annual conference of the Scottish Mineworkers' Union, by fifty votes to twenty-one, repeated on a card vote by 38,700 to 12,500, to declare its "appreciation and approval of the Socialist policy of Soviet Russia," and particularly for its policy of maintaining peace in the Soviet borders "for the further advancement of international Socialism."

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Who Pays for the War?

BY R. PAGE ARNOT

HERE AT LAST is the Budget the *Daily Herald* howled for. Here are the "bold steps," here is the "equality of sacrifice," as interpreted by the War Cabinet. Here is a Budget which received, as newspaper readers could discover, the "approval of all sections" of the House of Commons, and was greeted in the press with what the *Times* (which suppressed any mention of William Gallacher's speech) called a "practically unanimous welcome." Indeed, it is a remarkable Budget; for it represents a very big change in Britain, a change already visible in spheres other than finance. This Budget, apart from its swollen figures, differs from all that has gone before. For it is the first British Budget to be constructed on the principles of Nazi finance.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer made it plain that his object, in accord with the demands of the big monopolists, was control of costs, prices and wages. For this purpose he looks to "important extensions of the principle of subsidising essential goods and services" in order to minimise "the impact of increased costs": proposes "the policy of stabilisation" to prevent any further rise of the cost-of-living index number and says:

> "I hope we may thus create conditions which will enable the wages situation to be held about where it now is."

The subsidies, which may run into hundreds of millions, will be given to the Railway Companies, the Shipping Lines, the Coal Owners and the Gas and Electricity concerns as well as to any other groups of capitalists who are able to bring forward sufficient reason for becoming the beneficiaries of the Exchequer. Thus prices are to remain where they are as regards "essentials"—or to move upwards only a little.* Wages are to remain where they are—at the new stabilised lower level. They have risen only 15% as against a rise in prices, officially given as 27%, and in fact much higher. Profits, however, may rise as they please with the new proviso that, of those which do not escape the Excess Profits Duty, 20% will be handed back at the end of the war.

The Nazis, taught by the Versaille Reparations Commission and by the Dawes Plan, were the pioneers of these new principles of controlled capitalist economy. And where Schacht and Hitler led, Kingsley Wood must follow. The new principles of fascist finance in Britain were heralded by the publication for the first time of a White Paper giving an analysis of the sources of war finance and an estimate of the national income and expenditure in 1938 and 1940. This White Paper, which provides a basis for the policy of searching every worker's pocket, deserves more attention in the working class movement than it has so far received. Here, for over fifty years, capitalist spokesmen have sneered at any socialist presentation of how the people live, have pooh-poohed

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* "It would be impossible for me to promise that there should be no increase in price in any single item figuring in that index."—Kingsley Wood, 8th April, 1941. Items which do not figure in the index require neither promise nor refusal to promise. They are soaring upwards; and will soar higher still.

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class division and have painstakingly explained that "capitalism" is a figment of the agitator's imagination, an "invention" of Karl Marx; but now as the dictatorship of monopoly capital becomes more open, so everyone can read the categories that were drawn up before the growth of class struggle led to a century of explaining away. Here we have a national income divided into Rent, Interest and Profit at the one end, and Wages at the other with Salaries coming in between. Here we have the respective sources of income of the great classes of modern society resting upon the capitalist mode of production. Last year when Professor Laski was explaining to the delighted Labour Party delegates the practicability of extending "the sector of socialism" during the war, the capitalists, as you may read in this White Paper, were increasing their profits from £1,178 million in 1938 to £1,514 million in 1940—a difference not reflected in the amount of Excess Profit Duty collected—nor likely to be. The significance of this White Paper is that the Budget begins to mean not merely government Revenue and Expenditure but that the entire National Income of all classes and their National Expenditure, the entire economy of the United Kingdom is brought into the picture. This method, essential for a socialist economy and done for the first time by the Soviet State, is by a *mauvaise plaisanterie* transferred to a capitalist economy. There is in the U.S.S.R. a National Wages Policy directed to raising, and succeeding in raising, the material and cultural standards of the mass of the people. Now in Britain there is also to be a National Wages Policy enforced by State Monopoly Capitalism in the interests of the capitalists, and directed to the prevention of any rise in the material and cultural standards of the mass of the people.*

If the new Budget as a whole represents the principles of Nazi finance the proposed new taxes exemplify the first working out of the principles. The Budget has been hailed as (at last!) the "equality of sacrifice." The most elementary examination shows the falsity of this, and exposes it as a class budget, a rich man's budget, a monopoly capitalist method for the treatment of the livelihood of the mass of the people similar to that imposed by Hitler in Germany. The heaviest burden falls upon the lower incomes. This is clear if we use the calculations made before the war by the Labour Research Department on the basis of statements by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and leading Statisticians. The estimate of the more important taxes in the April 1939 Budget ran as follows:

TAXES (IN MILLIONS £) PAID BY INCOMES.

	Under £500 *p.a.*	*Between* 500 & £2,000 *p.a.*	*Over* £2,000 *p.a.*
	£	£	£
Income Tax	48	145	134
Surtax	—	—	70
Estate Duties	—	17	63
National Defence Contributions ..	—	—	25
Customs and Excise	319	24	6
	£367	£186	£298

* Part of the Lyttleton schemes supplemented this by eliminating small businesses and driving their owners into the ranks of the proletariat in the factories, where, along with other workers they will be tied to their jobs like serfs or moved about the country and made to go where they are bidden.

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It will be seen that the 15% of income tax paid by the lowest incomes before the war was offset even then by nine-tenths of indirect taxation which fell on their shoulders; and that the total paid by incomes under £500 was 43% of the general total. But the very rich, paying nearly £300 million in taxes, benefit (as the workers do not) from Government expenditure, not only in armaments and munitions profits, etc., but in the National Debt. It was estimated before the war that working class and middle class savings even if all were invested in State Bonds would account for less than 1% of the National Debt. Therefore to get the position of the rich it is necessary to subtract at least the interest on the National Debt amounting to £230 million per annum. This brings down the 35% that was their total contribution to these taxes.

If for the moment we were to assume the same percentages to hold good for the War Budgets (they are much more unfavourable to the smaller range of incomes, as we shall see later) and, taking only the two extremes, it would mean that in the financial year just ended the working class, together with others below £500, would be responsible for £80 millions of the income tax and for £480 millions of indirect taxes making a total of £560 million. The very rich on the other hand (paying 210 income tax, 76 surtax, 63 estate duties, 96 National Defence contributions and excess profits tax, and 10 in customs and excise) would be responsible for £455 million. Take away £230 million interest for the National Debt and the result would be a contribution of £225 million from the very rich in this past financial year, contrasting with £560 million paid by the working class.

But of course workers pay more than £80 millions in income tax. The successive income tax changes in the war budgets (40% increase of reduced rate on first £135 of taxable income in September 1939—or 2s. 4d. in the £: 60% increase of reduced rate on first £165 of taxable income in April 1940—or 3s. 9d. in the £: another increase of one third in July 1940 making it 5s. 0d. in the £: together with the lowering of exemption limit, the reduction of personal allowance and allowances for earned income and children) had already increased their heavy burdens of income tax before this present Budget. How the new Budget's heavier income tax will hit not only the working class, but the half million or so whose incomes run from £500 to £1,000 can be judged from the Government's statement last month in Parliament. In a full year the additional taxes will be contributed by individuals as follows:

Ranges of Income.	*No. of Taxpayers.*	*Yield in a full year.*
£110—£1,000	7,500,000	162
£1,000—£5,000	275,000	45
Over £5,000	25,000	24
Total for Individuals ..	7,800,000	231

Hansard, 10th April, 1940.

Note the class contrast. The very rich, the handful who possess over half the wealth of the country contribute less than one-sixth part of the amount paid by the lowest range of incomes.

Only simpletons think that the very rich are really paying out over 19s.0d. in the £. The abstract specimen incomes in the statement "as

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laid before the House by the Chancellor" (e.g. "Total income £150,000: total charge £142,999 17s. 6d.: effective rate 19s. 1d.") have little enough relation to the practices of the very rich. Ten days after the Budget it was announced that the Directors of the P. & O. Steamship Co. whose huge fees have been tax-free were now graciously going to pay income tax—not, however, the present standard rate of 10s. 0d. in the £ but the old pre-war rate of 5s. 6d. in the £. Mr. Ashley Cooper, a director of the Bank of England, etc., etc., is also a director of the Hudson Bay Co. which pays him £5,000 a year tax-free. Finance Acts one after another in the past thirty years have contained provision against evasion of income tax by the very rich. What else was the use of private limited companies, started 33 years ago, but to give facilities amongst other things for millionaires intent on evading the income tax? And what are Chartered Accountant for if they cannot help their wealthiest clients in this matter?

The Budget proposes that the sums paid by reason of reduction in the allowance for earned income and the personal allowance will be credited after the war in the Post Office Savings Bank. This of course is the Keynes proposal for "compulsory savings" or "deferred pay." After all the windy talk about the World-after-the-War, the three years National Unity, etc., etc., the only definite thing is this compulsory saving or rather the *promise* of the return of a small portion of income tax. The very language of Kingsley Wood was sinister in its implications. He spoke of "providing the small saver with a promise of a substantial nest-egg" around which he may lay other eggs so that he may have a sum sufficient to enable him "to face with further confidence the difficulties of the post-war world." So the only concrete thing in the World-after-the-War is the prospect of mass unemployment. Still—the worker will have his nest-egg. But suppose the egg should be addled by the inflationary process, which the *Times* foresees both as a present danger and as one that will be there "when peace is declared." How much will the nest-egg be worth then? Indeed there is a wonderful future in this magical nest-egg. For either it will vanish through inflation, or will be dwarfed by the roc's egg of National Debt. After the last war there was the Geddes Axe and then in 1931 the May Committee to show that no money could be afforded for anything but payment of the sacred interest on National Debt, and for armaments. Imagine after this war with the armaments which Lord Halifax says must be maintained and the Debt whose proportions cannot even be guessed Compare with the Chancellor's promise of "a substantial nest-egg" the prospect held out in a financial paper of

> "the safety valve of currency depreciation easing the load of debt which otherwise would have stifled all economic progress. Given the rate at which National Debts are built up the world over, the need for such indirect alleviation of the real weight of debt will be stronger at the end of this war than in any previous period in history."—*Economist*, April 19, 1941.

There is no hope in nest-eggs. The only hope is in a policy which takes the burden off the back of the working class and the mass of the people and transfers the burden to the rich. To those who ask "Where is the money to come from?" William Gallacher gave the answer in his Budget Speech in the House of Commons:

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"I have had an estimate made," he said, "of the effects of a tax on property. The total property in private hands is estimated at £25,000,000,000. Of this, about £14,000,000,000 is owned by 300,000 people each having property of over £10,000. It is these people, numbering less than 1 per cent. of the population, who would have to pay.

The number of persons with property of over £100,000 is 14,000. The total value of their property is £4,500,000,000. A tax at the rate of 33.1/3 per cent. on that property would yield £1,500,000,000.

There are 90,000 other people with property worth over £25,000, to a total value of £5,500,000,000. At 25 per cent., a tax would yield £1,400,000,000. Then there are 196,000 people owning property of a value from £10,000 to £25,000. The total value of their property is £4,000,000,000, and at 15 per cent., a tax would yield £600,000,000; making a total yield of £3,500,000,000."

To those who argued it would be impossible to collect because there was no mechanism for it in the Inland Revenue, Gallacher replied:—

"It is alleged that there will be a great deal of difficulty in dealing with the property, getting the examinations made, and the estimates worked out, and so on. But the Estate Duty returns show that persons with property of over £10,000 have, on an average, nearly a quarter of their wealth in the form of British Government and municipal securities. This makes it clear that such a tax could be arranged, if the Government had any intention of interfering with property."

But neither Tory nor Liberal nor Labour* members of the Cabinet appear to have any such intention.

THOUGH the *Times* and other newspapers thought discretion the better part of valour, and decided to spread silence on the proposals put forward by William Gallacher, the economists had been busy arguing against the property tax. Besides the argument that it was "impossible," dealt with by William Gallacher in his speech quoted above, another was that a tax on property would be "no use for current expenditure." What is this current expenditure, and where is it spent? It is being spent largely in the United Kingdom, and four sevenths of it is being made by the creation of debt. That State Debt is piling up. The United Kingdom is a capitalist economy: securities are £.s.d., State Debt is £.s.d., even land is capable of being transformed into £.s.d. Such an argument against the Property Tax has only to be stated for its absurdity to be manifest.

Yet another argument against Gallacher's proposal has been put forward in this form: That what matters is not money, but goods; that these proposals deal with money while the goods are simply not there; that there is only so much available for the workers to consume, and no matter how much or how little is taken from them by tax they cannot consume what is not there. It is argued that if even the present standard of life of the

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* At Bournemouth the Labour Party's entry into the Cabinet, "as equal partners," was accompanied by a resolution in which the Conference

"urges the vital importance of protecting the workers against schemes of compulsory saving and calls for the immediate restriction of profit and the imposition of a levy on capital."

The Labour Party's capitulation was formulated by Mr. Pethick Lawrence, who also expressed the hope that the Government would empower the Chancellor "to give a firm promise that a substantial levy on capital will be imposed at the end of the war."

This supplication to the ruling class to make once more the promise made by Bonar Law, the Tory leader during the last war, is a measure not of personal ineptitude but of the political degradation of the whole Labour leadership.

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working class were to be maintained it would require a mass of labour and resources which is impossible if the war effort is to be continued.

Now the force of this widely-used argument depends on one single assumption; that, no matter what the needs of the people, the sacred rights of property in land and minerals and other means of production, in the control of food, clothing and shelter remain untouched—and untouched with them all the present waste of resources, waste of man-power, jobbery and snobbery, corruption and red tape. Take away that single assumption and the argument falls to the ground. A little reflection on this argument and the assumption behind it makes it clear that the Property Tax must bring with it not only the transfer of tax burdens on to the very rich, but inevitably also a sweeping transformation in the production and distribution of essential needs. It means taking over the land and growing food enough for the people.

It means that instead of the Lyttleton schemes by which the supply of cheaper textiles is being cut down, while the production of luxury textiles continued, all production of luxury textiles would be stopped, and the nimble hands of the spinners and weavers devoted to the needs of the people. Instead of the present appalling waste of man-power in the production of luxuries and in the consumption of luxuries, also the waste of man-power in the factories where it is seen and commented upon by the workers, the labour and resources thus frittered away have to be devoted to the needs of the people.

Food, clothing and houses—these are the essential needs. They can be met and supplied from within this country. The land is there, rich men's parks and paddocks, rich men's golf courses, waterlogged areas requiring only to be drained, hillsides and moors requiring only to be sown with grass suitable for grazing. The man-power is there, and in quantities more than enough to furnish the labour necessary.

None of this will be done and no effort will be made to supply the needs of the people so long as the sacred rights of property remain, so long as the ruling class keeps its stranglehold, so long as the present Lib.-Lab.-Tory Coalition government is in power. To carry these things through requires a Government in the interests of the people. Only such a Government will dare to break the stranglehold of the very rich and to carry through not only the Property Tax, but with it the taking of the land, the growing of food, the provision of essential needs from the resources that are already there lying unusued, and from the man-power that is running to waste. It can be done: but only a Peoples' Government can do it, and at the same time lay the basis for further advance.

To this Budget with its principles of Nazi finance and its new crushing burdens on the mass of the people there is an immediate alternative in a Property Tax, which would take the burden off the shoulders of the people, transfer it to the very rich, and at the same time would be based on a grasp of the entire economy of the United Kingdom. A People's Government to carry through this tax could set going unused resources and wasted labour in the production of essential needs, and so maintain the people's standard of life. For you must take it from the rich or the rich will take it from you.

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The Regimentation of Youth

BY ROBERT WILDING

"This is wartime. The youth will decide the issue of the struggle, the student youth, and still more the working-class youth."—LENIN.

SINCE THE OUTBREAK of war the ruling class has made a concentrated effort to gain the allegiance of youth and to subordinate them to the war machine. There have been special calls to youth since the first days—far more so than in 1914. Youth battalions have been formed for those under age, youth have been drawn into the Home Guard and civil defence services, and finally the calling up age has been reduced to 18 after one year of war. At the same time gradations of pre-military training have been introduced ranging from physical training in the clubs and factories to the formation of an Air Training Corps for boys of 16 which stretches its tentacles down into the schools.

Apart from these measures, dictated by immediate military requirements, there has been a concentrated effort to "capture" all youth. The key section was the 14-20 age group, since a large proportion of those over 20 were in the army, while up to the age of 14 the children of the working-class were already being moulded into recruits for industry in the elementary schools. After the age of 14 a few attended evening classes or part-time courses, and an infinitesimal number were in full time education (roughly 108,000 out of 4½ millions). Therefore the vast majority were to be found in the factories and offices, in industry or on the land, working in shipyards or mines or in domestic service. These were the young people who must be drilled into the right state of mind and up to the required standard of fitness and skill to play their part in the war machine.

The ruling class could rely on the support of the bourgeois youth organisations such as the scouts, boys' and girls' clubs, Y.W.C.A., which inculcated the ideals of docility and acceptance of the status quo; but these covered only some 30 per cent of boys and girls. They could also rely on the Labour Party which has persistently diverted the energies of youth from the class struggle by keeping them out of politics and militant activities. Nevertheless the task was not easy. The conditions which youth suffer under capitalism cannot be explained away. The opposition to the war has been widespread among youth. Therefore the offensive against youth had to be an ideological offensive coupled with regimentation. But in view of the temper of youth a new approach had to be found in order to bring them more closely under the influence of the ruling class.

It was only a month after the outbreak of war that the National Youth Committee was set up by the Board of Education. With the aid of local education authorities and the bourgeois youth organisations, clubs and centres were opened in different industrial districts to draw in young workers in their free time. An intensive propaganda campaign was launched to turn away attention from the real issues, to allay criticism of the increasingly bad conditions brought about by the war and to enlist

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public sympathy. It was proclaimed that the Government were to look after all the "needs of youth". The general aim was stated to be social and physical training to develop "the whole personality of individual boys and girls to enable them to take their place as full members of a free community" and "to create a satisfied body and a joyful spirit". Leaving such examples of the Board of Education's oratory aside it can be seen that the clubs and centres were designed to provide recreational facilities for filling the leisure hours that might otherwise be spent in "undesirable activities", and through various means to encourage young workers to think about the right things in the right way. Free debates were frowned upon or forbidden; "leaders" were provided from the ranks of the bourgeoisie.

But although they filled an important rôle, these youth centres were only a beginning. It was necessary to find some more rigid means of organising youth. In addition many young workers were not able to bear the rigours of factory work at war pressure or to reach the physical standards required by the army, low as these had become. The Bristol investigation, published in 1939, showed that one out of five working-class children was growing up in poverty and 40,000 individuals were below the minimum standard in one of the most prosperous cities in the country in a year of unusual prosperity (1937). Such conditions were bound to be aggravated in wartime. A startling index of the deterioration in the health of young people in recent years has been given by a comparison of army rejection rates published by Le Gros Clark and Titmuss in *Our Food Problem;* the rejection rate during the years before 1914 varied between 25 per cent and 30 per cent when most of the applicants were unemployed, that in the years before 1939 varied between 40 per cent and 60 per cent although the major proportion of applicants were in work.

Indications such as these of the low level of health among young people led to the launching of the National Fitness Campaign in 1937 in preparation for the war. The National Youth Committee was designed in part to continue this work, as also were the Fitness for Service campaign and the numerous physical training courses now operating. But in order to develop this work further, and with the intention of co-ordinating the efforts being made and providing a central control, a Directorate of Physical Recreation was set up in August 1940 to work in close co-operation with the youth department of the Board of Education and the War Office.

In the same circular which announced the formation of the Directorate the Board of Education required youth committees, which had been set up under the jurisdiction of local education authorities in every district, to set up Youth Service Corps "giving young people opportunities for satisfying their desire to express themselves in service" and bringing them "to realise that the maintenance of their health and fitness is not only a personal duty but . . . an act of service to the country."

The basic idea of the Youth Service Corps is that of war service, and they are openly spoken of as a means of harnessing the enthusiasm of youth to the war effort. This development of the youth work undertaken by the Board of Education coincided with the introduction of industrial conscription and the renewed attacks on trade union rights. It is the continuation of this control in a form suitable for organising youth. The methods used appear to leave youth complete freedom, but in fact the Youth Service Corps are "guided" in every step by the bourgeoisie; there

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is a constant call for youth leaders to do this work and courses to train them in their duties are held regularly.

The first corps to be formed were in East Suffolk. Posters were issued to every village calling on youth to get together, appoint their own leaders and undertake work of local and national importance. In October after three months working of the scheme 142 squads had been formed with a membership of about 1,500 boys and girls most of whom had never previously belonged to any youth organisation. In addition 108 school squads were formed with 864 members. The work done by the squads ranges from help given to the forces, civil defence services, W.V.S., etc., collecting for war charities, hospitals and salvage, to odd jobs for farmers and housewives whose husbands have been called up.

In Liverpool, an industrial area as opposed to rural East Suffolk, organisation has taken the more rigid form of a Civil Defence Cadet Corps for boys of 15 to 18. In this case the boys are given training in first-aid, fire-fighting and anti-gas measures, and periods of physical training and drill by members of the A.R.P. services, the local police and the university O.T.C. When their training is completed they are used to reinforce the civil defence services although they are posted in separate centres of their own and work as a corps. The organisation was recognised at the beginning of February by Mr. Herbert Morrison and now has a membership of about 2,000.

The example of East Suffolk has since been followed in many other rural areas and that of Liverpool adapted in other industrial centres. The various schemes have as their organisational basis an extension of the control exerted by the bourgeoisie through the educational system and they are closely linked with the schools.

In the meantime the developments of the war situation brought new demands for recruits from the services. In particular youth was needed for the R.A.F. On January 10 the Air Minister announced the formation of a new Air Training Corps for boys of 16-18. Recruiting was officially opened on February 1st and after five weeks there were 630 local squadrons and 370 school units with a total membership of over 100,000. The Boy Scouts' Association simultaneously launched an Air Scouts section for boys under 16. The organisation is planned to draw on schoolboys as well as those at work. The squadrons now being formed in the secondary schools have as their officers schoolmasters with commissions in the R.A.F.V.R.; in addition squadrons are formed on a local basis and there are university squadrons.

Propaganda has again been given full play. "The new organisation will be a highway from the elementary, secondary and public schools and universities into the R.A.F." said Sir Archibald Sinclair in a broadcast speech. "In treading it there will henceforth be equality of opportunity for all." In fact the A.T.C. is simply a system of pre-military training which gives technical instruction for air crews, ground staff as well as for flying duties. As for equality of opportunity, boys are chosen to train for commissions by headmasters or by the County War Air Force Associations which are responsible for local units.

The ruling class have now succeeded in instituting a widespread scheme of pre-military training and in organising thousands of youth both in industrial and rural districts to support the war.

So far the Youth Service Corps are on a local basis and do odd jobs, but they can easily be mobilised into a labour corps if the need becomes

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greater. The way has been clearly pointed out. "This excellent idea of a labour service is of course not new" remarked the Times when the Derby scheme was publicised in January of last year. "Its germ was to be found in the Weimar Republic; under the Nazis it has become a part—*in many ways the best part*—of the preliminary training of youth."

But it needs more than organisation to harness the enthusiasm of youth. Thousands of young people may voluntarily have joined the Youth Service Corps, the A.T.C. may have appealed to over 100,000 boys. They offered something new, an escape from the grind of working life and an up to date appeal to the sense of adventure. But the problem is not yet solved; the ideological issue is still outstanding.

Young people to-day are very different from the young men pressed to fight in the war to end all war in 1914 and the girls then driven into the factories. From the outset the attitude of youth towards this war has been a source of constant worry and irritation to the ruling class. Youth have not been moved to an unquestioning patriotic frenzy. There has been no possibility of fostering the jingoism of 1914. Frequent references have been made to the evil effects of League of Nations propaganda. "I at any rate am not prepared to advocate teaching in our schools about international affairs which proceeds on pre-war lines" announced Kenneth Lindsay when he was Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education.

The British Youth Peace Assembly and the World Youth Congress Movement have had a profound effect on the outlook of a whole generation. Organisations representing hundreds of thousands of young workers have drawn up a charter of youth rights; they have seen what could be done and they have met with the stern refusal of the ruling class to act in their interests. Young people organised in religious, social and political bodies with widely-varying creeds and programmes have repeatedly sent their delegates to international congresses and camps. They have seen that the youth of other nations have similar problems to their own, that they are not enemies but comrades in arms. The thousands of young people who came to London on the National Youth Pilgrimage in 1938 to demand friendship with the Soviet Union and the peace bloc have seen the ruling class act against the desires and interests of the mass of the people.

When war broke out, it was brought home again to the ruling class that youth was alive to the issues and that there was an organised body of opposition. This time there was a Y.C.L. to lead the class-conscious young workers in opposition to imperialist war. The broader youth organisations in the B.Y.P.A. were discussing events freely and criticising and opposing the Government's home and foreign policy. Even less politically advanced bodies like the League of Nations Youth Groups and the Co-operative Youth came out against the war at their conferences. Perhaps the greatest defection, in the eyes of the ruling class, was the decision of the Leeds Congress of the National Union of Students when a majority of the student movement declared that the war was not in the interests of the people.

Admitting the failure of the ruling class to capture youth up to the present the *News Chronicle*, publicising the Youth Service Corps on January 23, remarked hopefully:

> "In this country we have never had a youth movement that could capture adolescents as the Komsomols have done in Russia or the Hitler *jugend* in Germany. Perhaps we shall have it now."

The British ruling class, of course, could never inspire a movement such

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as the Communist youth of the Soviet Union. They are, however, doing their best to emulate the Hitler *jugend*. They are conscripting youth for industry and the army, and momentarily diverting youth energies from the class struggle by demagogic appeals. But they cannot escape the basic contradiction of the frustration and wastage of youth that is essentially a feature of the last stage of capitalism and most clearly seen during imperialist war. In the Youth Service Corps, for example, they are attempting to make youth feel that they are doing important work as an integral part of a community. Yet in factory, field, shop and office, they continue to exploit youth ruthlessly, and to work to break its natural and growing spirit of class solidarity. Thus they are faced with insoluble contradictions, and can hope at most only to obscure the issues.

Official spokesmen have even gone to the trouble to explain their methods in detail. The President of the Board of Education, Mr. Herwald Ramsbotham, while shamelessly admitting that he regards the boys and girls only as instruments to serve their country, maintains that it is their overriding instinct to do so and that he is concerned to satisfy their needs. The Youth Service Corps and physical recreation, he announced on March 2nd, are to satisfy "the need to exist—a physical need; the need to create —an æsthetic need; the need to work and play with others—a social need; the need to know and exercise judgment—an intellectual need; and with and through and underlying all these the need for faith and belief in a purpose in life—a religious need." In fact Mr. Ramsbotham tacitly admits that none of the essential needs of youth can be satisfied under capitalism and he is concerned with hiding this fact to the best of his ability by offering a substitute.

Supporters of the County Badge training, who can be found in the bourgeois youth organisations, church circles, among educationalists and the "intelligentsia" profess to see in the scheme a hope for the future. They consider that the training should be made an integral part of the educational system, and that if this system is reformed society can gradually be changed by educating youth to make new demands. Thus, for instance, Hulton maintains that classes are imaginary and will disappear if the educational system is "democratised".

Culmination and logical conclusion of the whole ideological offensive has been the drive for a "return to religion". This campaign has flared up anew in recent months with particular emphasis given to the need for Christian education among youth. A statement was issued by the Archbishops from Lambeth Palace in February last. The Archbishops maintained first that "we are fighting to preserve those elements in human civilisation and in our own national tradition which owe their origin to the Christian faith." Then, that the most urgent task of the moment is "the training of future citizens in the Christian way of life. . . . Religious instruction should not be looked on merely as one of a number of subjects to be taught but as the foundation of the education given at the school. Its purpose should be to influence a child's whole attitude to life. . . . Religion should be the basis and foundation of the whole curriculum of the school."

They outlined five points whereby this scheme might immediately be put into action. Thus, faced with ever increasing contradictions and with a growing militant movement of the workers, the ruling class call in the leaders of the Christian Churches to aid them in throwing the individual

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back on himself, permeating him with a sense of impotence and submissiveness, and so weakening and undermining the class struggle.

As the war continues, these various efforts will be redoubled. The Youth Service Corps are being extended day by day, the County Badge Scheme is already being tried out experimentally, the efforts of the Archbishops are being strongly supported. Youth are being regimented in the service of the ruling class, under the pretence of a reform of the educational system.

But the present position is a dangerous one for the ruling class. As the hard facts of the conditions of youth become more and more obtrusive it becomes increasingly difficult to deceive the people. To-day youth, who should have life before them, are being robbed of their health and education, robbed of prospects and of a future. The most serious indictment of capitalism is to be found in the exploitation and frustration of youth. Where this was clear before the war when a generation grew up to blind alley jobs and unemployment, it is a thousand times more clear to-day. The vast mass of young men are in the army and the low pay they receive, and the lack of provision for their welfare, and the hardships their families suffer are not striking proof of concern for youth by the Government. In the factories conditions are extremely bad, in very many cases wages are below subsistence level, hours are long with excessive overtime and night work and the Factories Act has been thrown overboard. Apprentices are called up before completion of their training, girls are used as cheap labour. In the schools militarism is pronounced and the A.T.C. will increase this influence. Technical colleges are on production work instead of giving proper training and the universities are being turned into vast military academies where special training for men destined for the forces takes first place, a corner is left for research with a bearing on the war effort, but no place for students in other faculties who may be called up in the middle of their studies. Whether in school, industry or the army the interests of youth are subordinated to the demands of the imperialists.

Thus the real needs of youth are the same as those of the masses of the people, although with important qualifications. Youth are potentially particularly revolutionary because of exploitation and lack of outlet for their vigour and initiative, but they are also more strongly under the control of ideological influence of the bourgeoisie in the schools and youth organisations. Therefore, while the opposition to the "leadership" imposed upon them from above is growing and while a section of the class conscious youth under the leadership of the Y.C.L. are advanced in the revolutionary struggle, hundreds of thousands of young people are still misled by a false appeal or by their own enthusiasm directed into the wrong channels.

The ruling class have realised that the allegiance of youth is essential if they are to attain their ends; they are striving to gain that allegiance and have to some extent succeeded. But the Clydeside apprentices have given youth's true answer to this propaganda and their invitation. Youth on the Clydeside are closely linked with the workers movement and the class struggle; this is the all-important lesson. The most urgent task is to bring all youth into the people's movement. For it is youth that will decide the issue of the struggle.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Pot Called the Kettle Black

A Dialogue

*Sir Robert Vansittart**: Germans have made five wars in the last 75 years. If Germans had had their way, there would have been a war every eight years for the last three-quarters of a century. This sequence is due to their character and system (p. viii). A German War every fifteen years on an average. Butcher birds are destructive animals. (P. 3).

Quaestor: Very interesting. And was it character, or system, that brought about the following wars ?

1862-64, Intervention against Taiping (peasant) rebels, China ; 1867-68, War on Abyssinia ; 1871-74, War against the Ashantis ; 1878-80, War against Afghanistan (for refusing British residents ; 1879, War on Zulus (for turning out missionaries) ; 1881, First Boer War (to force British suzerainty) ; 1882, Bombardment of Alexandria ; 1883-98, Fifteen years war on Sudanese, ending at Omdurman ; 1885-86, War on Burma (asserting rights of British traders) ; 1886-95, Guerilla warfare after annexation of Burma ; 1892-93, War on Matabele (rights of trading organisations) ; 1895, Arab revolt against Chartered Company in British East Africa suppressed, and country annexed. War in Chitral ; 1895-96, Third Ashanti War (country annexed) ; 1896, British Fleet bombarded Zanzibar at close range (to suppress *rebellion* against pro-British Sultan) ; 1897, War in Tirah ; Expedition against Hausa States (Niger territory) ; 1899-1902, Boer War (rights of British goldminers) ; 1900, Intervention against Boxer (peasant, anti-foreign) Rebellion in China ; 1901-1902, Expedition against Aro States (Niger territory) ; 1903, War in Somaliland ; 1904, Expedition to Lhassa (Tibet).

And leaving out the awkward question of whether wars were part of the British system, who do you think has been the butcher bird in India, Sir Robert ? Here is the record during the first forty years after the Indian Mutiny: 1863, War with hill tribes on North West Frontier ; 1864-5, War with Bhutan; 1868, War with Bazotis on North West Frontier ; 1873, Mopla *riots suppressed* ; 1874-5, Expedition against Duffla tribes on North West Frontier ; 1877, Afridi raiders "chastised" by punitive expedition ; 1881, War declared against Waziris; 1884, Expedition to Zhob Valley to punish raiding Pathans ; 1888, Black Mountain expedition to avenge murder of two British officers and 5 Sepoys: many villages burned ; 1890, Insurrection against Nawab of Cambay suppressed by British troops, in response to his appeal ; 1891-2, Risings on North West Frontier suppressed ; 1895, Risings on North West Frontier suppressed ; 1897-8, Risings on North West Frontier suppressed.

Sir R. V.: The German people have been taught to regard great wars as inevitable and salutary (p. 3). Impregnate a race with militarism, imbue it with a sense of its own superiority, convince it of its mission to enslave mankind for the good of mankind, persuade it that this end justifies any and every means, however filthy ; and you produce a race of hooligans which is a curse to the whole world (p. 12).

Q.: The British people have been taught by their rulers that lots of little wars and frontier graves have set the bounds of Empire wider still and wider. Impregnate a race with imperialism, imbue it with a sense of its own superiority, convince it of its mission to put the White Man's Burden on the backs of brown, black and yellow alike, persuade it that this end justifies the filthy means used in China, in India, in Africa—and you produce a *class* of hooligans which is a curse to the whole world, worthy rivals of the Nazis, and enemies of the British race no less than of their foreign slaves.

Sir R. V.: The butcher-bird has been furiously at his habit during the last two and a half years ; it has impaled on its blackthorns Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Denmark, Luxembourg, Holland, Belgium and France (p. 13).

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* "**Black-Record,**" by Sir Robert Vansittart. 1941 (Hamish Hamilton, 6d.)

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Q.: When did you discover Austria, Sir Robert? Certainly after Sir Neville Henderson had reported, and the British Government had complacently published, a document proclaiming the seizure of Austria as "the unity of Greater Germany—a reality which had to be faced" (*Cmd.* 6115, September 20, 1939). We didn't hear from you when Chamberlain bullied Czechoslovakia into surrendering its fortifications to Hitler, thereby rendering its annexation inevitable. Curiously enough, you do not mention Spain or Abyssinia; is it because, perchance, you are still tender of the Italian butcher-bird, as you always have been, and even the German butcher-bird has only earned your displeasure because it broke away from the team, and turned its back, instead of its beak, to the U.S.S.R.

Sir R. V.: What made its fifth war a certainty was the advent of the most horrible oppression that the world has ever seen. This tyranny was brought about and guided by fanatical, efficient gangsters (p. 6).

Q.: True enough. Strange, however, that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on September 20, 1939, presented to Parliament, by Command of His Majesty, Sir Neville Henderson's Report stating that "it would be idle to deny the great achievements of the man who restored to the German nation its self-respect and its disciplined orderliness."

Sir R. V.: Potential reformers in Germany have always been a weak minority (p. 15). Under the Kaiser, as now, the German working man had no say in his own fate; he was just cannon fodder and factory fuel (p. 46). The German race is a deaf horde that knows only blind servility to tyrants (p. 55).

Q.: I might reply by quoting someone who ought to be an authority even for a Vansittart—the Tiger, Clemenceau, who wrote in his "Grandeur and Misery of Victory" (1930)—a book written to show that Germany ought not to be trusted: "Unquestionably and naturally, in Germany as everywhere else, the workmen, peasants and lower middle class are true pacifists, and view the possibilities of new butcheries with horror" (p. 327). But you draw a grossly untrue picture of the German workers, most gross above all, in the suggestion that they are a race of natural slaves. I challenge you to take the second volume of the "Memoirs of Prince Max of Baden," the last German Chancellor under the Kaiser, and tell the British people honestly what you read there about the qualities, servile or otherwise, of the German workers.

Sir R. V.: (discreetly silent).

Q.: Very well, then; here are the facts. At Kiel, in the course of November 5th, Red Flags went up on the mastheads all over the bay. The Commander of the "Koenig" was shot trying to protect the German (i.e. imperial) flag (p. 295). The course of events in Lübeck was typical. On November 5th, four warships appeared in the bay; the sailors occupied the General Post Office, the station and the military stores . . . The troops that were at hand did not dream of taking any steps to protect the authorities . . . In the same way and on the same day, the sailors took possession of Brunsbuettel at the mouth of the Elbe. Next day, Cuxhaven and Hamburg made their revolution (p. 307). On the morning of November 8th, the news of the revolution was as follows: Brunswick had gone Red on the evening of the 7th; Munich Red in the night; the Munich Ministry of War was occupied by the Workers' and Soldiers' Council, the Republic had been proclaimed, the King's abdication demanded by 12 noon. In Stuttgart the power was in the hands of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. At Cologne the Provincial Government was negotiating with the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils (p. 331). At Berlin on November 9th, about 10 o'clock, the message reached us that many thousands of unarmed workers were marching in procession upon the centre of the city. Geheimrat von Schlieber came with a similar report from the Ministry of the Interior. At 11 o'clock, Lieutenant von Etzdorf appeared at the Ministry of War and reported that the fourth Jaegar Battalion and other formations in the Kupfergraben barrack, the Jaeger Battalion in the Palace, and the armoured cars in the Palace were refusing to move against the people (pp 349, 351). At 12.30 p.m., the G.O.C. Brandenburg District telephoned to the War Minister: "Message from Guards that the great majority of available troops will no longer shoot, and have formed Workers' and Soldiers' Councils." (pp. 355-6).

Sir R. V.: Yes, and look what happened. The Republic of Weimar fell because Germans in the plural never really desired political independence or maturity (p. 44).)

Q.: You were private secretary to Lord Curzon, and you know the truth—that the Republic of Weimar fell at the hands of the landlords and Junkers,

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bankers and big manufacturers, whom the German workmen and soldiers in revolt had overthrown in November, 1918, for one brief moment, and whom you deliberately saved—your class includes you—by helping them to crush the workers for fear of Bolshevism in Europe. You saved them then as you saved them on many occasions thereafter, and as you supported them all through Hitler's first years, in the hope that he would lead Germany in war against the U.S.S.R.

Sir R. V.: (again discreetly silent).

Q.: This is how Colonel House, the intimate representative of President Wilson, reports his discussion with Lloyd George and Clemenceau on October 30, 1918, i.e., before the armistice ("*Intimate Papers*," Vol. IV, p. 121): "I pointed out the danger of bringing about a state of Bolshevism in Germany if the terms of the armistice were made too stiff, and the consequent danger to England, France and Italy. Clemenceau refused to recognise that there was any danger of Bolshevism *in France*. George admitted it was possible to create such a state of affairs in England, and both agreed that anything might happen in Italy." But House's arguments had an effect even on the obdurate Clemenceau, as we see from the summary he transmitted on November 9, 1918, of the interview between Marshal Foch and the German delegates (p. 141): "Their line is to say that they will be overwhelmed by Bolshevism if we do not help them resist it, and that afterwards we shall be invaded by the same plague." Foch himself remarked in a footnote, the Germans only had to surrender 30,000 machine guns, half of the German army's equipment; so they still had 30,000 to shoot down workers with—and did so. The whole of 1919, 1920 and 1921 were filled with savage massacres of the workers by the "supporters of order," whom the Allies had left armed for the purpose.

Eighteen months later, when the Peace Treaty had been signed, and the German army reduced accordingly, there were scores of thousands of officers, landowners' sons, young middle class men, out-of-work police officers and similar elements organised in illegal armies—the Einwohnerwehr and the Orgesch—which were the mainstay of the capitalist regime in Germany against the workers. It was these elements which had murdered Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg, suppressed in blood the workers' Soviets in Bavaria and on the Ruhr, and terrorised the working class, artificially maintaining the Social Democrats at the head of the labour organisations, which otherwise were slipping into the hands of the most resolute section of the workers—the Communists.

How the British ruling class viewed the situation can be well seen from the Memoirs of Lord D'Abernon, who was British Ambassador and virtually unofficial dictator of Germany at the time. Thus, on November 23, 1920, we find the Ambassador writing (and bear in mind that what he wrote went, as events subsequently showed):

"Without in any way abandoning the demand for the surrender of rifles and small arms, I should advise a somewhat less energetic and categorical attitude than in regard to the larger material. I should fear to disarm the orderly sections of the people, leaving arms in the hands of the extreme Socialists and Spartacists. Regarding the Einwohnerwehr and Orgesch organisations, it is difficult to decide whether these make for order or for future trouble. They are, at bottom, monarchical and military, although they deny it. But I consider the danger from the Left far exceeds the danger from the Right, and in the event of a new outbreak of Communism in Germany, it can be regarded as certain that these organisations would powerfully serve the cause of order" (p. 92).

So the Allies, to preserve what they called order in Germany, i.e., to prevent the workers, peasants and soldiers from making an end of capitalism as the Russians had done, kept in being the gangs which they knew at the time meant "future trouble." You have your future trouble *now*, Sir Robert. Turn up the past records of the present leaders of Germany political and military, and you will find them all in the ranks of the formations which "powerfully serve the cause of order."

Sir R. V.: But don't I declaim in my pamphlet against the tender-hearted people who believed, after the last war, that "the whining bully must be picked up and dusted down, and put on his feet again" (p. 5)?

Q.: Yes, you do. But like the swindling politicians that your class relies upon, you try to throw upon others the blame which you justly bear yourselves. You want the German workers to be responsible for the ruling class which you put back in power. You are hoist with your own petard.

You don't even mention that, as an exception to the disarmament of Germany, your very Armistice terms provided that the *existing* German Army

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should remain in the Baltic States—where there were Soviet Republics—so long as "the Allies shall consider this desirable, having regard to the internal condition of these territories." And six months later, when you were dictating to the Germans the final Peace Treaty at Versailles, and when the German troops in the Baltic States had largely been replaced by "unofficial" cut-throats, you took care to insert an exactly similar provision in Article 433.

The British workers will follow your advice, Sir Robert Vansittart, and "be duped no more by the friends and touts of the Brazen Horde" (p. 56). They will see to it that this war will end in a victory for the workers over the Brazen Horde, both in Britain and in Germany.

They That Take The Sword

Choose Your Future, by *D. N. Pritt, K.C., M.P.* Lawrence & Wishart. 2/6.

If excuse were needed for the publication of this lucid, logical, pungent book, it lies in three facts:

(1) The Government's recent proposition for the maintenance of "National Unity" and the "Party Truce," and even the postponement of an election for several years after the war, which reveals a fear of any radical change in our economic order and a determination to resist it. As there is to be no criticism of the government during the war, there is to be none after it. A recent leader in the "Times," as mouthpiece of the Government, assuming as necessary a period of colossal unemployment after the war—though the whole land will need rebuilding—points in the same direction.

(2) The Labour leaders have unreservedly acquiesced in this proposal. They are now yoked tamely to the government to serve as the yes-men for all its home and Imperial policy, however antagonistic that policy may be to the interests of the mass of the people, whether in the abrogation of trade union rights, its restriction of the right to strike, the scandal of the air-raid shelters and the like on the one hand, or in the closing of the Burma Road or the hostile attitude to the Soviet Government as shown by the seizure of ships and the Note on the Danube Commission. Such a party, which with consummate skill the government uses as the implement to infringe upon the people's rights, offers no leadership to the people.

(3) The root cause of this present war, as of the last, lies not in the wickedness of Hitler or in the peculiarly vicious nature of the German people but in an economic system which leads to the creation of Hitlers and Mussolinis and inevitably leads to war, and will always do so until it is radically changed.

(1) Any radical change of our capitalist order will meet with the fiercest resistance from the possessing classes and will demand the clearest thinking, the boldest statement, the wisest and truest leadership and mobilisation of the people as a whole.

Mr. Pritt marshals these ideas in his own relentless, logical way, in a book which demands as wide a circulation as his "Must the War Spread" has received. His sword sharpens with conflict; his logic was never so irresistible as here, and his case is as good as every intelligent and convinced Socialist knows it to be. It is good because it recognises the deep currents and forces which underlie the waves and cross waves on the surface of human affairs and which, once recognised, enable the prophet to prophesy truly, and the people to know their proper leaders.

Peace is the thing the common man wants. Permanent peace: and permanent peace will never come through the present government or the capitalist order which it champions and guards; defeat of Hitler, perhaps, yes; peace, certainly no; only the stage for other wars. And even the defeat of Hitler, which Mr. Pritt desires no less earnestly than I (and far more earnestly than the man who yesterday helped Hitler to re-arm and supported his attack on Spain and Czecho-Slovakia) is seriously imperilled unless the will of the whole people is enlisted against him. For this they must feel that the fight is a real fight for democracy and not the strife of one imperialism against another, which in the meantime is more the occasion of steal-

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ing away the liberties of the workers under the plea of war necessity. If the people are to be mobilised—and we saw in the case of Spain what a people mobilised could do—it needs the kind of understanding and the kind of leadership such as this brilliant book postulates.

It is the duty of every person who wishes to help rid this world of war to circulate and distribute this book to the utmost of his ability.

HEWLETT JOHNSON.

Connolly Speaks Again

James Connolly—A Socialist and War. Edited, with an Introduction, by P. J. Musgrove. Lawrence & Wishart. 2/6.

Here's a little book that every worker ought to get, whether he can spare a half a crown or no. Here's a worker's Spitfire, trimly turned out, spraying a crowd of messages that will tell the worker something about Ireland, and a lot about himself. The book gives the best of what Connolly said about the Great War and its many complications gathered from Labour papers appearing during the years of 1914-1916. It is all old stuff, written twenty-five years ago, when the workers of the world (instead of uniting) started to cut each other's throats; and a few fine ones tried to separate them, mostly falling themselves, like Leibknecht and Rosa Luxembourg, murdered by jingo German officers, and Connolly, executed in a legal and laudable manner to ensure the safety of democracy.

All old stuff; but curiously new and strangely fitting what is happening today everywhere around us, at home and abroad. Really, this new war is but a continuation of the old one; it is the second round in the world's fight for the world's ownership—but not the ownership of the people. Almost everything is now as it was then; and we see (as we saw) the "Socialists" tarring themselves all over with the imperialist brush in the midst of the totem song, with tom-tom accompaniment, of Roll Out the Barrel. There is but one difference between then and now, and it is a majstic difference. It is, of course, the living presence of the mighty Socialist State, ready to surge forward wherever they may hear the voice of the people calling them; Red horse, foot, artillery and tanks on the earth; Red airplanes in the sky; printing presses to get the minds of the workers moving; and song and play to show the workers that they do not live by bread alone; a menace to the few; a fair hope and a full pride to the many who see the red star hang high in the sky.

All old stuff; but as the Editor, Mr. Musgrove, says in the Introduction, "It is impossible to conclude without comment on the freshness, and indeed topicality, at the present moment, of these writings which were published a quarter of a century ago."

All of it what might have been written yesterday, or to-day, or to-morrow; closely akin to what was being written in "The Daily Worker," before the powers, out to perpetuate complete freedom of opinion, silenced it (as they thought) for ever. But it is as easy to stop the march of the workers as it is to bridle the wind, or hang a roller-blind over the face of the blessed sun himself.

Read in "War upon the German People," that "Governments in Capitalist Societies are but Committees of the rich to manage the affairs of the Capitalist Class"; a truism not yet learned (or, if learned, forgotten) by many of the Trades Union Leaders. Read "The Right to Strike," or "Economic Conscription," or "A War for Civilization," (though here, I think, Connolly is in error when he says that in the Crusades nations went mad over matters that did not enter into any scheme of selfish calculation—there was selfishness and to spare according to *the account of what the Venetians did* to gain Zara and Byzantium given by Ville-Hardouin); read any or all of these, and the aptness of things written long ago will astonish you all.

Here are many fine things said by him who, under the great leadership of Jim Larkin, helped to kindle a fire in Ireland that never can be put out. I hope there will be a big sale for this little book, for the selections have been well and truly made, and form a collection admirably suited to the problems facing the workers to-day, and that may be with them for many a day to come.

SEAN O'CASEY.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Problems of Modern Europe. Jackson & Lee. (Cambridge University Press.) 8*s.* 6*d.* 128 pp.

The Threat to Wages. (Labour Research Department.) 2*d.* 16 pp.

Marxism, is it Science? Max Eastman. (Allen & Unwin.) 8*s.* 6*d.* 332 pp.

The Revolution is ON. M. W. Fodor. (Allen & Unwin.) 10*s.* 6*d.* 237 pp.

Panic. Freeman & Cooper. (Crescent Press.) 6*d.* 40 pp.

France & Britain. (Fabian Anglo-French Co-operation Committee.) 2*d.* 8 pp.

A Great Experiment. Viscount Cecil. (Jonathan Cape.) 16*s.* 390 pp.

The Unity of India. J. Nehru. (Lindsay Drummond.) 12*s.* 6*d.* 432 pp.

Soviet Peace Policy. V. Molotov. (Lawrence & Wishart.) 3*s.* 6*d.* 101 pp.

Fabian Quarterly. (Fabian Society.) 6*d.* 37 pp.

Ideas and Ideals of the British Empire. Ernest Barker. (Cambridge University Press.) 3*s.* 6*d.* 164 pp.

CORRECTION

A number of misprints occurred in the April issue.

The wording should be:

Page 149, line 4—not "1927," but "1917";

Page 173, line 35—not "material," but "markets";

Page 181, last line of text—not "Tom Hayward," but "Bill Haywood" and "Eugene Debs";

Page 186, line 12—not "nationalisation," but "rationalisation";

Page 192, line 36—not "thirty," but "these."

Owing to the destruction of our Cayton Street premises by fire, all communications for the Daily Worker Defence Leagues and The People's Press Fighting Fund should be addressed to :—

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Public Lecture

by

R. PALME DUTT

5.30 p.m. SUNDAY, MAY 25th

ROYAL HOTEL, WOBURN PLACE, LONDON

Admission: 6d. by ticket obtainable beforehand from:—

(*a*) *Discussion Groups Dept., 'L.M.' 134 Ballards Lane, London, N. 3.*
(*b*) *Central Books, Collets, New Books, etc.*

N.B. Limited Accommodation.

The Lecture will be preceded by a Conference on Labour Monthly Discussion Groups open to members of existing Groups and those interested in forming new ones. Credentials (6d. per person) admit to Lecture. Apply to Discussion Groups Dept., as above.

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Discussion Groups Bulletin

The Purpose of the Groups

As the war develops the conditions of more and more people are sharply affected, and everywhere an increasing number are ready to question ideas and institutions which they have hitherto taken for granted.

The rapid and spontaneous growth of the *Labour Monthly* discussion groups is an indication of the tremendous demand for political enlightenment, for education through discussion and question.

It is now possible to introduce hundreds of new people to the *Labour Monthly*, to draw into political discussion people who have before never felt the need of it. In this situation it is therefore extremely important to increase the number of discussion groups and to improve their working.

The Basis of the Group

The group is a meeting place where every point of view is welcomed and is open to criticism and discussion. The group must not be tied to a political line or programme. It does not exist to pass resolutions or to send delegates to conferences. Its function is *educational*. The activity which necessarily follows from effective political discussion is a matter for each individual member, *working in whatever organisation he belongs to*.

Nor should the group be confined to readers of the *Labour Monthly* although of course every attempt should be made to get such members to attend. Readers should always be encouraged at every meeting to suggest names of sympathisers who might be invited to the next meeting. The secretary of the group should take careful note and should build up a *mailing-list* of likely people to invite—personally, if possible—to attend. This is extremely important. The only way in which the group can be built is by this personal invitation.

How to Run the Group

The best size for a group is about twelve, and once attendance becomes very much more it is desirable to consider splitting the group into two.

Careful attention should be paid to the meeting place, and usually it is best to meet in a private house where it is possible to maintain the informal nature of the discussion. It will often be found, too, that an interval for tea helps to break the ice, and enables even the shyer members to take part in discussion.

It is important to have a small committee to organise all group meetings and the following suggestions for procedure have been made in order to obtain a useful and well-planned discussion without in any way creating a formal atmosphere.

(a) The group convener or chairman should open with a few words on the purpose of the group, should welcome newcomers, and should introduce the opener.

(b) The following notes describe two methods, either of which may be used to advantage, in opening.

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1. The opener, who should have been appointed beforehand, of course, may, on the basis of the usual discussion notes, make a fairly short statement and then take questions and discussion.
2. The opener may set out, on the basis of a number of concrete questions worked out beforehand, to elicit ideas and contributions from members of the group. In this case he will obtain the co-operation of one or two leading members of the group who will come prepared to answer one of the questions. The opener will first indicate very shortly the kind of questions with which the current issue seeks to deal. He will then raise the questions one by one, obtaining as many different replies as possible, and perhaps making note of them. At the conclusion of the meeting he should make a short contribution summing up outstanding points.

   It will often be found that this method is able to obtain the maximum number of contributions.

   Suggestions for questions will be sent to groups each month, and all groups are invited to send in unsolved or debatable questions, and all possible help will be given.

   N.B. It is most important to treat all difficulties and objections in the most sympathetic manner possible.

(c) It is not either practicable or desirable to obtain a "speaker" for these discussions. Members of the group should take it in turn to open.

(d) It is not desirable that there should be many other items on the agenda, but the following points should always be included:
   1. Methods of spreading sale and influence of *Labour Monthly*. Extra copies should always be available*
   2. Where practicable a small literature stall should be developed.
   3. A collection should always be taken for the group funds, for the *Labour Monthly*, and occasionally for other suitable objects.
   4. The next meetings should always be fixed before the meeting ends.

*Also copies of *Labour Monthly* pamphlets.

(e) It is important for the group convener to send in regular reports to the *Labour Monthly* giving suggestions from his own experience, and asking for any help and advice he needs.

What You Can Do About It

Is there a group in your town, block of flats, street or workshop? We depend on YOUR initiative. Our list of readers only covers the postal subscribers who are only a small section of our regular readers. It is therefore useless to wait for known members to come together. If you would like to form a group don't wait, write in to us and we will let you know if we have any information or other members near you, and we will put a notice in the *Labour Monthly* to say that a group is being formed and inviting inquiries.

Industrial and Factory Groups

We have been tremendously encouraged by the development of a number of industrial groups. This is of the utmost importance. If you are an industrial worker and would like to start a discussion group please write in to us and we will give you every help. In particular you have an

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admirable opportunity for pushing the sales of the *Labour Monthly* which is now being widely read by industrial workers. It is on the basis of these *sales* that you will be able to start your group.

Provincial Developments

We are hoping to arrange for *Labour Monthly* lectures in different parts of the country, and these might well be followed up immediately by plans for regular group meetings. If you are interested in these plans let us know so that we can keep in touch with you as our plans develop.

Reports from the Groups

It is essential for us to hear regularly from groups. If your group is going ahead please write to us and let us know if we can help in any way. If for any reason you have not been able to get started we should also like to hear from you so that we may correct our records and if possible can help you to start again.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Correspondence from the Groups, which is increasing rapidly, tells of widespread activity and great interest in the discussions. Some of the most interesting letters have come from the factory groups which are springing up all over the country. The Convener of one such group writes:

> "The group has agreed to meet regularly and I think our first problem is going to be the job of splitting up the group and forming further sections. *We are filling a definite need in the factory and I feel sure that its growth is inevitable. The readrship of the LABOUR MONTHLY here is now nearing a hundred, and this by no means is the limit. Will let you know further of our efforts.*"

From a Scottish factory comes news of a steady increase in the sales of *Labour Monthly*, which has now reached 100 per month, and on this basis an effort is being made to start a group. Many other such groups have been formed or are in process of formation, and I feel quite certain that others exist which we have not heard of.

Interesting groups are engaging in a great variety of activity and seem to express almost every point of view. Many of them have been formed from the nucleus of defunct Left Book Club Groups, a point that might be borne in mind by others. Several are organising social gatherings through which money is raised for the *Labour Monthly*, and outside friends are drawn in—this is an excellent idea.

DONCASTER reports a particularly interesting discussion on R.P.D.'s paragraph on Christian Ethics in the *Labour Monthly*. Each member of this group has promised to take three copies of any pamphlet issued by the *Labour Monthly*. Other Groups please copy. Mr. Holloway, the Convenor, makes the interesting suggestion that Groups should establish contact with each other, that his own Doncaster Group would be very pleased to get in touch with some Welsh or Scottish group. Would any groups who would like to act on this suggestion please write in to me and I will endeavour to link them up, as Mr. Holloway says "they could swap ex-

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periences and even supply each other with a precis of their monthly discussions."

Now, just a word as to difficulties and questions. One group has been rather held back by the tendency of some members to use the group purely as a medium for active political propaganda instead of as a broad forum for education and discussion. This clearly indicates need for firm chairmanship and a careful explanation to such members, pointing out that other organisations exist for the purpose they have in mind, and that they should try to understand the very special task of the groups. I hope that all Convenors will make a special point of giving firm guidance on this all-important point.

A number of most interesting questions have been raised in the course of Group discussions which have been passed on to us for help in answering; this we are endeavouring to do, and should some of these questions prove of general interest we hope in the near future to circulate replies to all the groups. One such question was about the relations of the Soviet Union with Bulgaria, at the time when that country was being over-run by the Nazis. Could we have more of these questions, please? We will, of course, reply individually, and they will also indicate to us the problems on which group members need further guidance. That guidance the *Labour Monthly* exists to provide.

We suggest that all readers who would like to be put in touch with existing Groups, or who would be prepared to attend if one were started, should fill in the following form. We will then notify you of any Group activity in your district.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Please send to Group Organiser, *Labour Monthly*, 134, Ballards Lane, London, N.3.

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